AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT!

mediascene

NOVEMBER·DECEMBER $1.50

THIS ISSUE:

THE MAKING OF A VISUAL NOVEL
GIL KANE
RICH CORBEN
R.E. HOWARD

MASTER OF THE MACABRE
BERNI WRIGHTSON

THE MAD WORLD OF
JACK DAVIS

WALTER GIBSON OPENS THE SECRET FILES
THE SHADOW RETURNS

MALCOLM McDOWELL
ROYAL FLASH

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A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

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MEDIASCENE is a bi-monthly publication devoted to popular culture in multimedia from the comics to the cinema
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: single issue $1.50 year $7.50
published by supergraphics box 445 wyomissing pa/19610
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second class postage paid at reading, pa

MEDIASCENE

"I never know what to expect!"

That's one of the things I hear most from *MEDIASCENE* readers when they describe the magazine—and we wouldn't have it any other way. We feel the element of surprise is an asset to the publication, and do our best to build it into the basic structure of every issue.

As we see it, few things could be worse in a magazine such as *MEDIASCENE* than to be taken for granted—or to put it less politely, dull. It seems too many media publications (whether they're about comics, films or any other entertainment) have become predictable, insipid and unimaginative. We're not saying we haven't contributed our share of media pollution, and we plead guilty to a charge of occasional pretention (blame it on our enthusiasm), but we think we've managed to keep *MEDIASCENE* alive with ideas and concepts.

As far as we're concerned, that's the bottom line.

Do feel free, however, to take for granted our quality reproduction, our dynamic graphics, our careful selection of material, our immaculate typography, our energetic approach, our unimpeachable humility, and our sense of humor.

No, we will not be surprised to discover *you're* surprised with some of the material that's coming up in future issues of *MEDIASCENE*. And that's good!

More on our upcoming projects later. Let's take a look at what's ahead this issue. At this writing, one of the most exciting ventures relating to the comic art medium has appeared on the horizon: a pair of graphic novels which hold the promise of beginning a trend in that direction. To get the full story, *MEDIASCENE* is raising Kane—Gil Kane, in this case, who just happens to be the guiding light behind the project.

We first heard about the books a year or more ago, when Gil phoned to discuss the possibility of collaborating on the art (Kane pencils, Steranko inks). The request was met with mild surprise as we've never considered inking one of our strong points. The challenge of working with a skillful storyteller and designer like Gil Kane seemed quite appealing, and we agreed to discuss the possibilities sometime in the near future. That meeting, however, was never to take place, due to an excessive number of committments on our part which included the editorship of this magazine.

Unlike most of his peers, Kane had previously scored with two endeavors independent of his straight comic work, *His Name Is Savage* and *Blackmark*. Though they were less than critical and financial successes, both were nonetheless important and noble experiments aimed at expanding the narrow perimeter of visual storytelling.

Where others would have thrown in the towel, Kane seemed more determined than ever to continue the fight. His approach and style are considerably stronger this time. Kane has mounted a double-barreled campaign to capture the market with his own epic, *The Flame Horse*, and has followed up with a second entry, illustrated by Richard Corben over a Robert E. Howard story. Both books have black and white interiors and are 100 pages in length, more than enough to deliver a knockout punch—if the timing is right.

The European market is swelling with hardbound comics in many formats (Kane obviously will offer his books for foreign consumption), while American attempts have been somewhat less than spectacular. Two recent offerings immediately come to mind: Jim McQuade's sex/adventure *Misty*, and Berne Hogarth's hardbound *Tarzan*. Kane knows that part of the problem lies in educating the buyer, the consumer who can get almost 100 pages of comic art (even Kane and Corben) in a stack of comics for a dollar or two. Kane's publications cost $12.95.

There will be resistance, but the eventual outcome of the matter will prove edifying—and will point the way for more (or less) of this kind of experiment. Currently, Kane's *Flame Horse* is scheduled for a Christmas release. Corben's *King of the Northern Abyss* should go on sale sometime in mid-November. SUPERGRAPHICS will carry both books upon their publication.

Phil Seuling, bon vivant and Con man extraordinary, went right to the source for a revealing, behind-the-scenes look at Kane's latest venture. The resulting article reflects on the reasons and the resolutions which went into the making of the books. Keep it all in mind when you read them.

If you enjoyed Richard Lester's *Musketeer* films, you'll make it a point to see his latest historical entertainment, *Royal Flash*. *MEDIASCENE* Special Features Editor, Eric Van Lustbader, previews the film and gives us a first hand profile of its star, Malcolm McDowell. Beginning with this issue, Eric will be a regular contributor to these pages in addition to writing for magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *Gig*. Should you find yourself reading his features as soon as the issue arrives, remember you read it here first.

Though our format is flexible enough to accomodate almost any kind of material, one feature continues to draw reader approval—film news. As usual, this issue covers the upcoming season with a detailed words and pictures report guaranteed to keep you up-to-date on the film scene.

You'll discover a special focus on comic art this issue (and in future issues) highlighted by an exclusive interview with one of the most popular and pre-eminent illustrators on the scene today, Berni Wrightson. From where we sit, Wrightson leads the field in the suspense and horror genres, so we seemed poetically justified to turn the interview over to an old friend of ours who specializes in writing about the macabre, Don McGregor. You'll find their resulting dialogue at least as refreshing as an open grave—enjoy it!

MEDIASCENE staffer Joel Thingvall gives us an incisive look at America's most successful pop artist in his personality profile of Jack Davis. If you think you can judge an artist by his work, wait'll you read this piece! In keeping with this issue's emphasis, you'll find the comic news expanded by a hefty 25%. Please don't applaud. Just throw money!!

Most *MEDIASCENE* readers must be aware by this time of the death of Vaughn Bode. We felt it fitting, and necessary, considering his last testament appeared in the previous issue of this magazine, to present the truth about this tragedy, and say a final word about a friend.

Much of the thrust of last issue's success was predicated on the extensive coverage of Barry Smith and his work. The mail response was sizeable and convinced us that working together might produce some truly extraordinary results. To begin with, we're pleased to stock a number of Smith prints and publications, several of which are shown here for the first time. More surprises will follow.

Walter Gibson alias Maxwell Grant concludes his two-part feature on The Origin of The Shadow—and foreshadows a special layout in the next issue on How to Paint The Shadow, complete with step-by-step photos of the painting's progress. Included will be a host of unpublished sketches, roughs and studies, along with a running commentary both fans and artists should find interesting.

While we're on the subject, we might as well give a hint to some of the features planned for the months ahead: a photo spectacular on the 50 RAREST PULPS, a mini-history of THE GREAT DETECTIVES, pictorial coverage of the new SF film *LOGAN'S RUN*, a preview of Frank Herbert's third *DUNE* novel, a COMPLETE STERANKO COMIC STORY—the first in five years, and a series of exclusive interviews with artists, packed with unpublished illustrations. Make sure you're with us!

We Saved The Best For Last Dept: Because of the overwhelming success of our double issues, we are increasing the size of *MEDIASCENE* to that format beginning with this issue. Current subscriptions will be reduced on a two-for-one basis. Single issues will sell for $1.50. Yearly subs for $7.50 ($1.50 savings). Though it doubles our work, we hope it'll double your fun.

If you want to tell us your thoughts, write—or see us personally. We'll be appearing at the Starcon 4 Convention in Detroit, October 30 to November 2. Guests, films, dealers and the usual turmoil will prevail. Be sure to catch our Shadow painting exhibit, an even dozen.

Til then, take care.●

STERANKO

SUBSCRIBERS–PLEASE NOTE: THIS DOUBLE ISSUE COUNTS AS TWO!

comixscene back issues

For a limited time only, we have a quantity of back issues available, but our stock is rapidly running out! If you are missing any of the early issues of COMIXSCENE, now is the time to get them!

savage

1 — Power packed premiere issue on DOC SAVAGE, illustrated versions of Doc by Mike Ploog, Gene Colan, Dan Adkins, Marie Severin and Steranko. Big Doc Savage article spotlights the Man of Bronze. News and reviews, capped off by pulp and comic reproductions. Full-page Shadow presentation piece by Steranko.

shazam

No. 2 — Special CAPTAIN MARVEL issue, featuring the story behind Beck's reunion with the Big Red Cheese, illustrated with photos of artists and writers from the 40's and the 70's. Beck's Rip Van Marvel appears, along with articles on the Spider pulps, Krupp underground comix and an offbeat and surprising centerspread by Steranko.

horror

No. 3 — Haunting HORROR COMICS issue, from EC to the Marvel black and whites to the undergrounds, all discussed and dissected in a definitive article, illustrated with dozens of vintage horror comic covers. "Frogs," the wordless, innovative graphic story by Steranko, appears in the centerspread. Pictorial feature on Horror Pulps.

drugs

No. 4 — DRUGS AND THE COMICS is the theme of this special issue that examines the role of comics and drug usage. The controversial 8-page anti-drug story "The Block," by Steranko highlights this issue, along with the story behind its creation. Plus more news, articles, features, and behind-the-scenes editorial by Steranko.

sorcery

No. 5 — Special SWORD AND SORCERY issue. Giant double issue featuring news, articles and art. Never before published illustrations by Morato, de la Fuentes, Smith, Kubert, Kirby, Steranko and others. Definitive articles on Conan and Howard. The Evolution of S&S and Barbarians in the Comics, and more on the heroic fantasy field.

burroughs

No. 6 — Big BURROUGHS issue, full of action-packed facts and graphics. An article on Burroughs at the Pulps is featured along with giant center spread poster-map of Barsoom. John Carter's long and fantastic career is recapped with rare pulp illustrations. Comic scene, paperback reviews, films, records and media fill out the package.

violence

No. 7 — Colorful CRIME AND VIOLENCE issue, from Public Enemy to Magnum Force, featuring Steranko cover and centerspread paintings. Interview with Executioner author Don Pendleton, writing for crime thrillers by Max Collins and Clint Eastwood profile. Expanded news in Sci-fi and media to go with title change to Mediascene.

pin-ups

No. 8 — Pixillatin' PIN-UP issue, packed with a special graphic history of pin-up art from comics to calendars to cinema. A Steranko tribute to Marilyn Monroe graces the centerspread, along with pin-ups from the past. Larger comics, Sci-Fi and media news are heavily illustrated with exciting graphics in a new, redesigned format.

heroes

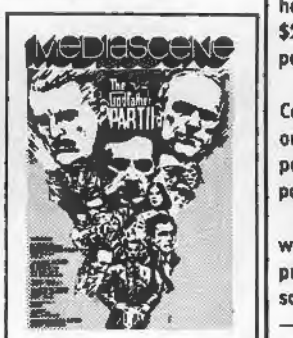
No. 9 — Amazing All-HERO issue, featuring a photo-packed layout on the filming of Doc Savage, interview with Zardoz director John Boorman, full-page map of Tarzan's Africa, Steranko centerspread of his barbarian hero, Talon. Comic, film, TV and paperback news about Conan, Flash Gordon, others fill out this heroic issue.

sci-fi

No. 10 — SCIENCE FICTION Spectacular illustrated by Williamson, Wood, Hinge, Steranko, more. Giant double-issue packed with art and graphics, fantastic 6-Million Dollar Man centerspread in color, EC's SF comics revisited, Planet of the Apes, SF on TV, The Great SF Illustrators, Incredible Pulps, comics, films. A galactic blockbuster!

adventure

No. 11 Bold ADVENTURE issue features Hollywood's disaster films, The Return of The Pulp Heroes (Shadow, Savage, Spider), Pictorial Profile on Charles Bronson, Planet Pulps, Behind the Scenes at the National Lampoon. New, large 32-page format, expanded news sections, more vibrant color with super-sized Sword and Sorcery centerspread



films

No. 12 — Big FILM issue, Special Preview of Godfather II, Roger Moore in Gold, others; Pictorial of James Bond in Man With the Golden Gun; The Mistress of Mystery, Agatha Christie and her film Murder On The Orient Express; new movie bio of Lenny Bruce; The Gangland in Film and Fiction; colorful centerspread poster; art covers; film.

action

No. 13 — All ACTION issue, packed with photo coverage of The Great Waldo Pepper, Phantom of the Paradise, and The Legend of Billy Jack. Special feature on The Return of Sherlock Holmes with bonus centerspread poster in color. Photo focus on ten new flicks, plus comic, paperback, more media news. SF, fantasy, adventure abound!

pulps

No. 14 — Powerful ALL-PULP issue, featuring the most fantastic heroes in fiction. The Secrets Behind The Shadow written by his creator, Walter Gibson; Spectacular color-filled centerspread introducing the Doc Savage and Shadow fan clubs; in-depth feature on the Origins of Pulp Heroes. Preview of Tommy, Eiger Sanction, more.

comics

No. 15—Double-sized COMICS issue. Vaughn Bode's startling self-portrait in words and pictures, his last creative work; a penetrating look at Barry Smith, illustrated with a giant color centerspread; special feature on Jack Kirby's return to Marvel with exclusive Bi-centennial pin-up of Cap America; The Art of Neal Adams with a full-page Tarzan.

artists

No. 16—Special ARTISTS issue. The full story behind the Gil Kane, Richard Corben graphic novels; Master of the Macabre, Berni Wrightson, reveals his influences and aspirations in a candid interview; Final Tribute to Vaughn Bode with an unpublished portrait by Vincent Bode; photo feature on Royal Flash; expanded coverage on comics, movies,

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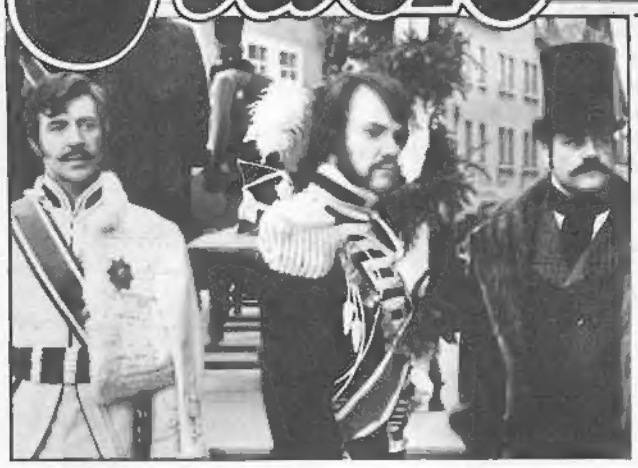
Royal Flash



A PHOTO PREVIEW OF RICHARD LESTER'S NEW SWASHBUCKLING SATIRE BY ERIC VAN LUSTBADER

Malcolm McDowell is a clever young man. In person he is nothing like his screen image; most actors seldom are. Not to say that the characters he portrays are not clever. But he does have a disquieting tendency to play rather callous, unfeeling fellows who nevertheless, by dint of a combination of charm, luck, and sheer bloody-mindedness, triumph in the end.

McDowell, perhaps best known for his remarkable portrayal of Alex, the ambitious hero of **A Clockwork Orange**, sits now in a plush beige suite in New York's Pierre Hotel, not at all the cocky little imp one might expect him to be. He is bright, intelligent and beautiful, with open features dominated by enormous blue eyes. He appears a happy person, self-assured but without any ego-facade whatsoever. Disarming. But he has definite opinions on just about everything.

His latest film is 20th-Century Fox's **Royal Flash**, directed by Richard Lester, the history of which is quite interesting. Traditionally, English children were brought up on a book called **Tom Brown's School Days**, written by Thomas Hughes. The main villain in the novel is a brash bully by the name of Harry Flashman. Contemporary author George McDonald Fraser got the bright idea to take the Flashman character and create a series of pseudo-historical novels around him.

Written as the remembrances of the elder Flashman, set against the flamboyant backgrounds of India, Afghanistan, England, and the Balkans in the mid-Seventeenth Century, the books paint an outrageous but hilarious portrait of Harry Flashman, Victorian soldier-hero, coward, drunk, lecher.

The series begins thusly: ". . . You will have read, in **Tom Brown**, how I was expelled from Rugby School for drunkenness, which is true enough, but when Hughes alleges that this was the result of my deliberately pouring beer on top of gin-punch, he is in error. I knew better than to mix my drinks, even at seventeen."

Who better to collaborate on this project than Malcolm McDowell and Richard Lester. Lester, one of the brightest names in motion pictures rocketed to prominence in 1968 with the release of a black and white film titled **A Hard Day's Night**, starring four British loonies. His most recent projects have involved, coincidentally enough, George McDonald Fraser, who wrote the screenplays for Lester's films, **The Three Musketeers** (The Queen's Diamonds) and **The Four Musketeers** (Milady's Revenge) released in 1973 and 1974, respectively.

"Richard is a comic," Malcolm reveals, "a comic with serious overtones, which is much better than the other way round, because his perspective is so unusual. It's also an effect more difficult to pull off." He turns slightly against the light streaming through the large windows to get a better view of Fifth Avenue below. "Stanley (Kubrick) is altogether different. I can't say I had the best time working for him. His ego gets in the way too often. I'm not pleased with the final results of **Clockwork** simply because I know how much more was there. You see, there were so many reactive shots of my face that he cut out. It made for a cold effect. You know Stanley does all his casting with a videotape machine. He never does live auditions or meets the actors or actresses before they are hired. It's crazy, really.

"Now, Lindsay (Anderson, who directed Malcolm's brilliant performance in 1972's **O Lucky Man!**) never could have directed **Clockwork**—you know he was offered the film before Stanley—he's too humanistic. He's a poet really, and that film was such a collaborative effort."

Royal Flash is in fact based on the second of the Flashman novels (currently there are four in the series, available from Signet in paper). Why not start at the beginning of the series one might ask. Well, the first book deals almost entirely with Flashman's exploits as a soldier in India. It is long and, despite the amusing moments quite harrowing in its depiction of the bloody clash between British and native. Not at all Lester's cup of tea. Nor ours for that matter.

Royal Flash opens in England after Flashman has returned from the conflict, festooned with decorations and medals for bravery—all of which, we see in a brief flashback, are quite undeserved. That, of course, is the essence of Flashman. He addresses the graduating military class: McDowell's face against the background of a mammoth British flag—immediately setting the tone of the film. This parody of the opening of **Patton** is perfect and perfectly conceived because the joke puts into cinematic terms the tenor of Fraser's literary satire.

It becomes clear too that this is a more mature Lester. Gone is the scattershot visual-joke technique, indiscriminate and over-powering, that marred some of his previous films such as **A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum**. Gone is the unsure experimentation that marked films like **Petulia**. And, as the film progresses, we notice that the inconsistancies in plot, the episodic nature of scenes, the lack of pacing, which were trademarks of the Musketeers films, have also disappeared.

In fact it would be safe to say that with the sole exception of **Juggernaut, Royal Flash** is Richard Lester's finest recent film.

Malcolm confided, "There's a good bit of Flashman in all of us"

And what of McDowell? From the moment he gets caught in a brothel raid and, escaping, seeks sanctuary in the carriage of a lady, we know that he is perfect for the part. Malcolm **is** Harry Flashman, brash, cocky, in the end cowardly, yet above all, immensely appealing. No matter that the carriage he chooses belongs to the infamous Lola Montez (played by Florinda Bolkan) nor that he insults the lady's escort, Otto von Bismarck (Oliver Reed)—in those days merely a count and completely unknown to Flashman. No matter that this will change the course of European history! The irrepressible Flashman rolls merrily and obliviously along.

In lesser hand, **Royal Flash** might have been just another of the numerous costume films which are released each year. However in Lester's talented hands, all things become special. Ordinary scenes take an overtones of the comic and the surreal. For instance, in a scene which is mostly dialog between Flashman and a solicitor, Lester chose the setting of a Turkish bath. Billowing steam greets us and for moments that is all we see. Then Flashman appears from beneath the steamy water, rising through the mist like a ghost.

Or take the fight Flashman has with Bismarck's henchmen—one of whom has a wonderfully inventive metal claw instead of a hand. It takes place in a kitchen and, naturally, with all the dueling, hacking and thrusting, a substantial amount of damage is done. A sword slices into a loaf of bread, a piece of hanging meat is cut, the bread is inadvertantly sliced again, all during a furious battle where Flashman fights for his life. Yet as he escapes, his hand scoops up—viola—a sandwich. It's enough to make audiences applaud!

Though it may seem so, life is not all fun and games for Malcolm himself. "Isn't it funny," remarks Lindsay Anderson, who has been McDowell's director many times, both in film and on the stage. "I tell you it's very strange—and it's not a Brando case—I mean Brando rather likes to do films in which he gets subjected to terrible things because there is a masochistic element in his acting. With Malcolm it is just the opposite. He's got such a dynamic sort of personality that he just gets into films where the character does a great deal."

Take Alex, for example. He drinks Moloko-Plus, beats up his friends, rapes several women, cripples a man, is imprisoned, is subjected to the Ludovico Treatment, is almost murdered by music, is beaten senseless and almost drowned.

Take Mick, for example (in **O Lucky Man!**). He is interrogated as a spy, nearly blown up, set on fire, turned into a DNA experiment, is thrown through windows, and hunted relentlessly by mad scientists.

As Flashman, he is continually climbing up or down walls, imprisoned, wounded, trapped, tossed off bridges, nearly drowned several times and is fooled more than once. But, undaunted, he rides it all out with such aplomb as to make it all seem easy.

"Mind you, I'm not complaining," Malcolm counters with a wide grin, "but I must admit to having hurt myself more than once during the course of filming. **Clockwork** was the worst, really. Having my eyes held open was murder, even though they kept putting drops in. I almost really drowned in the scene near the end, and when I was beaten, after being released from prison, someone got too overzealous and broke several ribs. To top it off, I developed a blood clot that did not show up until several weeks later.

"But I truly enjoyed making **Royal Flash**. Richard is such fun to work with. And filming much of the action in Bavaria, using the authentic houses and palaces was terrific." He laughs. "Cold but terrific."

The premise of **Royal Flash** is quite simple and direct. After the insult to Bismarck, and after Flashman has spent a delicious week with Lola Montez, we move ahead six years. Lola, now mistress to Ludwig, the mad king of Bavaria, sends for Flashman. Money is involved and thus he agrees to go. But it is all part of a plot hatched by the scheming Otto von Bismarck and his associate Rudi von Starmberg, played by Alan Bates, a most unusual role for him, since it is neither meaty nor difficult. The supposition, as it has been in Lester's previous films with other actors and actresses, is that Bates wanted the opportunity to work with Lester.

The resulting complications are too numerous to go into and, in any event, are best left to be seen and not read about.

The photography, is lush and beautiful, making the most of the snow-covered Bavarian landscapes and the authentic interiors. In fact, every foot of **Royal Flash** is a feast for the eyes.

Oliver Reed, dark and heavy, is properly menacing as the man who went on to unite Germany, and Britt Ekland, as the Duchess Irma, the woman Flashman is forced to marry, is icily regal.

Royal Flash then is one of those rarities: a funny film, with both satire and slapstick, that is not tedious. And it is its' intelligence which, in the end, makes it such a delight to watch.

Malcolm McDowell rises from the plush beige couch as the hotel waiter clears the table and wheels it out. He has proven to be just another human being, after all, charming and clever and friendly and, thankfully, without feet of clay. He grins his wide and impetuous grin, open and winning. "He's a great character," Malcolm confides, "Because you know there's a good bit of Flashy in all of us."

MANY OUTRAGEOUS THINGS HAVE BEEN SAID ABOUT BARRY SMITH'S ART...

Barry Smith has travelled far beyond the realm of comic book illustration to bring you a new dimension in Fantasy Art. He has created an enigmatic world of haunting beauty, enchantment and awesome wonder—an atmosphere where good and evil intertwine, where reality and imagination become one; timeless, ethereal, unearthly—and he calls it THE DEVIL'S LAKE.

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IT WAS ALL UNDERSTATEMENT.

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Whithering. Barry Smith's finest and most inspired black and white work, combining breathtaking graphic realism with a darkling, demonic supernatural image of a deathshead vision turning slowly—and looking at YOU. A superior achievement in it's intricate detail, being subliminal to the impact of the ghost of all memories. Whither . . . where? This extraordinary reproduction is 15" x 20" in size and clearly captures each minute embellishment perfectly. Whithering is printed on 65 lb. textured cover stock and is available for $2.50 plus .50 postage and handling.

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BARRY SMITH SPECTACULAR ! ! In issue 15, **MEDIASCENE** featured the latest and most personal profile on Barry Smith yet published. In addition to a giant color centerspread by Smith, the Special Double Issue also showcased a full cover reproduction of his Something Icwaes, and a preview of his new project, Robin Hood. Still $3.00.

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creating the graphic novel

The advertisements have been appearing in fanzines for months, ever since the July Comic Art Convention in New York City, where two books were announced to the public for the first time—"masterworks of stunning beauty and magnitude" they are called. And although the books, **The Flame Horse**, and **King of the Northern Abyss**, have yet to appear, the superlatives might turn out to be accurate descriptions, considering the people involved in their production.

It's no secret that the work of Robert E. Howard is in triumphant revival now being republished in hardcover, paperback, and comic book format, or that his highly "visual" material has tempted interpretations from the top artists of the day—Mike Kaluta, Roy Krenkel, Frank Frazetta, Barry Smith, Jeff Jones, and many more. This new work, then, can be expected to produce fireworks from another current master—Richard Corben, who will give us his insight into **King of the Northern Abyss**, a Howard opus which has not been adapted into graphic form prior to this attempt.

Corben himself is too recent to the field to be considered rediscovered, but the REH story represents his first appearance in hardcover. The situation seems ripe to produce some unpredictable delights for the eyes, since there has to be a considerable liberating effect involved in preparing material **not** designed for the comic magazine page. (Yes, probably new restrictions are included as well, but even they will necessitate **change**). Richard Corben has shown by his black-and-white work, his color work, his posters, and his film (**Neverwhere**) that variety of expression appeals to him. It should titillate the prospective reader's appetite to anticipate what one part Howard, one part Corben, poured into book format and mixed well might produce! It's a cocktail we will soon be sharing.

The third party in the total creative effort is Gil Kane who is writing and drawing **The Flame Horse**, and editing both books. Kane has followed a long trail in learning the business of producing stories in pictures. From his day as a teenager, excited over each new piece of work he was assigned, he rapidly and surely became fully professional in his work, and then more imaginative, stylish, and forward-looking as his work grew. His debut as editor came with **Blackmark**, a milestone in comic art, published by Bantam, in paperback for the mainstream (as opposed to special interest) audience. Currently being adapted to the black and white magazine format for Marvel Comics, **Blackmark** is unquestionably the precursor of Kane's current two books, dealing as it does with sword-and-sorcery matter. The heroics of the genre are to an artist like catnip to a cat, and given the enthusiasm which **Blackmark** was greeted with, further steps in that artistic direction were inevitable. Thus, **The Flame Horse**, and thus, REH. As for Kane, it can best be said that now, with his artistic and professional capacities cresting, he is still excited over each new piece of work he approaches.

Interviewed recently at his Connecticut home, Kane was articulate and concerned about the success of his new venture and the overall significance for the comic art Field of such a project.

"The hardcover book is a necessary shift of format from the small, pulp-textured very limited, comic book page to the full scope an expensive paper stock (and the way it "receives" color) can provide." Kane, once started, doesn't need prompting.

"And the format is changed, as well as its physical appearance. Using text **and** pictures to further the story line is a conscious attempt to set a deliberate pace for the reader. Character and motivation give a story depth and fulness. Mere plot line is like cotton candy, disappearing quickly and providing 'empty calories' for the mind. Nothing substantial to hold on to. It is the character of Conan, for instance, that remains with us afterwards, not the series of actions in each episode of his saga. And establishing character, providing motivation, filling in atmosphere and tone—these are possible only at a slower pace than one uses to

leaf through a comic book."

Such a device was used in the E.C. line, it was remembered, but the innovator in this style was the late Charles Biro, whose **Daredevil (and the Little Wise Guys)** and **Crimebuster** and **Crime Does Not Pay** raised the standards of comic book writing forevermore, requiring a higher caliber, more literate audience to succeed. His books **did** succeed, and begat E.C. and Harvey Kurtzman and Al Feldstein. And they begat the early Warren magazines, and so forth, eventually leading to **Blackmark.** Which makes one wonder which comes first, style or format. Does the physical appearance of the product require a certain style to fit it?

"No, just the reverse," continues Kane. "We decided on a fine artwork and writing approach for these books. To achieve the maturity and sophistication we aimed for, we had to prepare scripts with excellent visual elements tied together and slowed down by the prose. Artwork alone can't hold the reader to the pace at which he could fully appreciate the whole effort. The text does that. For us, you see, the style determined the format."

There must be examples of work Kane himself admired, which supported his theory of pacing.

"Certainly Eisner's early work. And Biro, and E.C., of course. And **Little Orphan Annie**, the earliest days. The strip just knocks me out, because Harold Grey, the producer of **Annie**, understood **exactly** how to set a moderate pace by the use of a great deal of text."

Apparently, others had counted on finding a readership to meet the requirements of their more literary efforts, and at least some of them did find an audience. Kane mused over where **his** audience would come from.

"The same people who supported E.C. The people we call fans, not the casual readers of comic books, but those who are involved in the field, who have some powers of involvement. The material will be challenging, making demands on the reader. He will have to be able to rise to that challenge or else the effort will be wasted. On a superficial level the books will not catch on. And the reader we are trying to reach is prose-oriented rather than graphics-oriented. The art will be there, and it will be the best, but it will be the writing that makes the capture. The visual element is what holds the eye, but only until the prose takes over and holds the mind."

"The answer is introspection," counters Kane, "Artwork of the kind we need can only be produced by an artist willing and able to delve within himself to find his own fantasizing, his own agonizing which enriches his drawing. His art has the power of being part of his bloodstream. It comes right out of his veins and the reader will recognize that. The reader then provides his own inner vision to relate to the artwork."

It sounds like a very personal statement the artist is called upon to make, and the reader is called upon to respond to.

"Yes, but the internalized point of view creates a unique result. Look at Corben's work, which exemplifies this style."

The interview was itself becoming internalized, beginning to home in on the personal efforts, the thousands of small victories and the equal number of setbacks en route to completion of the project. But there were still questions about the packaging and the economics of the two books. The price of each book is pegged at $12.95.

Is the day of the $10.00-plus comic book upon us? According to a trend which has become noticeable in the past year or more, the answer would appear to be yes, as absurd as that would seem at first reading. To those of us whose memory most strongly flashes "10¢" at the stimulus words "comic book", a hundred-fold increase is nearly unimaginable. But. . .

"I think so," says Kane, whose involvement in the comic art field as artist, writer, designer, editor, scenarist, and publisher entitles him to some knowledgeable guesses. "But certainly not for the same mass audience which publishers depend on now. No one expects the casual reader to spend such a sum on the monthly comic books of today, **especially** since they are shrinking rapidly in every dimension."

It is easy to agree with Kane. The **Origins of Marvel Comics** at $10.00 (hardcover) was a sensation. The Burne Hogarth **Tarzan** (Watson-Guptill, $9.95) went into second and third printings, and rumor has it that further installments are forthcoming. National Periodicals has a ten-dollar **Origins** on the schedule. There seems to be more reason to wait to build another shelf for these books. It will be filled in no time.

I reminded Gil Kane, as we sewed up the talk, that his fans who studied every comic book story he drew, and the people who had been enthralled by **Blackmark**, were anxious to see the new productions.

"Comic books never fully satisfied me as an artist," Kane concluded, "and **Blackmark?** That was just the raw beginnings!"

It was almost possible to see him standing high on some craggy hilltop, eye on the horizon.●

Phil Seuling

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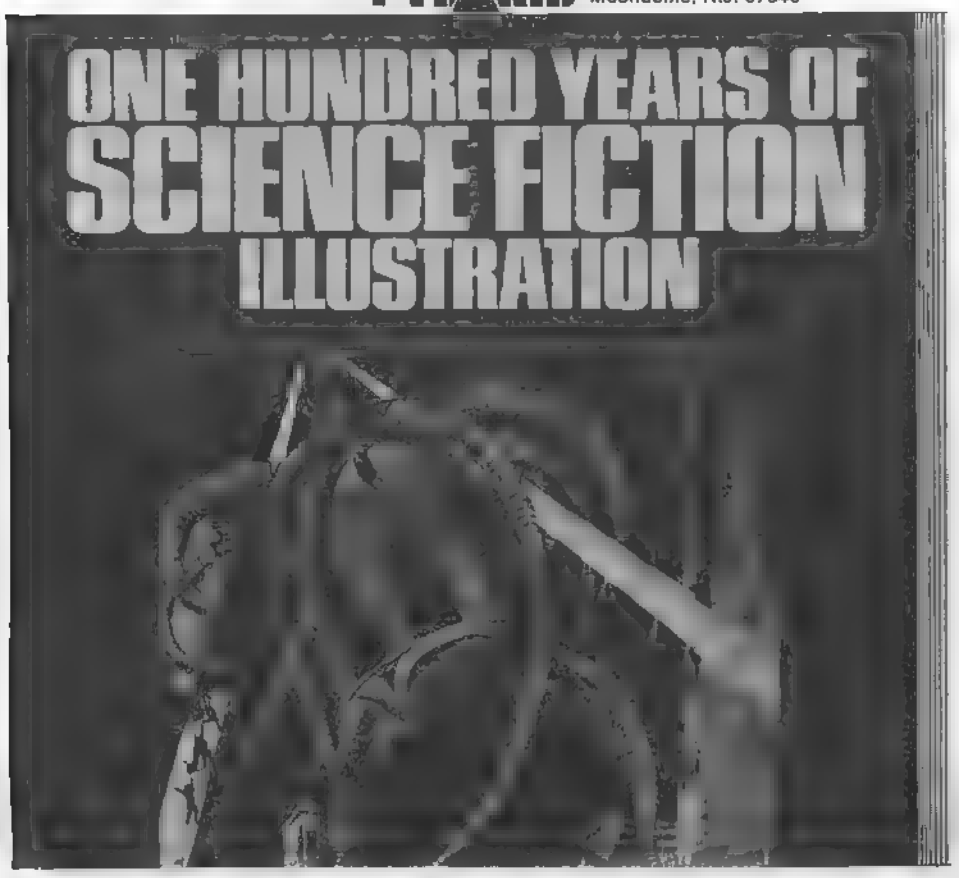

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VAUGHN

I am a light wizard, a freak, living a natural high disguised as a social, sexual cartoonist.

That's the way he bailed it down for the record. But to those of us who knew him personally, knew him from the early days, Vaughn was considerably more.

I met him in the mid-60's about the same time his first professional publication, **The Man**, was impacting itself on the Marvel overkilled psyche of the American comic scene. It was immediately apparent to every student of the liviest of all the arts that **The Man** bore the promise of a new direction in a field bristling with promises, promises that soon became chaff when subjected to the omnipresent corporate money machines.

I reserved judgement, filed it neatly away, told Vaughn with a wink I wouldn't be seduced into reading his material until he learned to letter legibly.

Any reservations I had promptly vanished with the publication of the mad and mythic Junkwaffel saga, a cumulative work almost impossible to ignore once you've experienced it.

Vaughn's ambition, ability and output suddenly seemed to be expanding faster than a DNA molecule gone wild. He was producing dozens of fanzine covers and stories, appearing almost everywhere at once. Even more importantly, he was part of the contingent who developed the underground movement in comic art in the late 60's, working for the **East Village Other**, the Underground Press Syndicate and becoming editor of the first underground comic tabloid, **Gothic Blimp**. In 1969, he won science fiction's coveted Hugo award.

He had fulfilled the promise he exhibited early in his career. He even began to letter more legibly.

Remember the first time you saw Sunpot in **Galaxy Magazine**? Or Deadbone Erotica in **Swank** and **Cavalier**? Or Cheech Wizard, Machines and Lizard Zen in **National Lampoon**? I do!

Everything, it seemed, was coming up Bode. There were paperbacks, T-shirts, booklets, posters, comics, slides and more. At the same time, Vaughn managed to graduate in Fine Art from Syracuse University in 1970.

Through it all, he was in control. He understood, perhaps better than almost every other artist/writer/editor in this field, the value of maintaining commercial rights to works of art, from ideas to full-blown characterizations to individual drawings.

I would see Vaughn frequently at the Marvel offices, talking with Stan Lee. Taking the Marvel route, he could have had a spectacular international following; yet he continually rejected all offers which would result in losing control of his material. Vaughn relentlessly courted The Big Success, but only on his terms—something few comic artists have ever done. It was one of the qualities that made him unique.

Another was the aspect of originality. Artists have always had their sources, their inspirations—most often from other artists. To my knowledge, Vaughn sought inspiration from other artists exclusively on a creative level, and perhaps used their progress to pace his own career—but never for style or technique. He chose to express his philosophy in cartoons, yet he wasn't derivative of Walt Kelly, Mort Walker, Walt Disney, Windsor McCay, George Herriman, Milt Gross, Harrison Cady, Elzie Segar, Al Capp or a hundred others who have left their imprint on those who came after.

No, Vaughn was an original in a business brimming with avatars. True, he didn't have the power of Kirby, the sophistication of Toth, the draftsmanship of Buscema, the dignity of Williamson, the control of Wood. He didn't need them. He had originality and he made it work. His appeal was broad and basic, almost primal. And besides, his stock figures and ragged line were easy to copy. His ideas were a bit more difficult to imitate.

Vaughn's originality was matched by his remarkable ability to make things happen. If he set a clear goal in his mind, it became only a matter of time before that goal became an existing reality. His tenacity was awesome. He was an achiever among a brotherhood of dreamers.

He paid the price for it.

Vaughn became a businessman, an administrator, an entrepreneur—a 24-hour-a-day hustler who backed up his plans with a kind of perpetual determination—a complete about-face for any creative individual. He realized this was the only way to make his dreams materialize.

He proved that it could be done and, if we needed it, he gave us a spark of hope that our own endeavors would find equally fulfilling conclusions. It's what I admired most about him. We were both, of course, traveling in the same direction—that of controlling and merchandising our own material. The books, posters and portfolios are all first level manifestations of that control.

Vaughn took it a step further—and created Bode's Cartoon Concert.

An individual who often described himself as an "extremely introverted kid, completely unable to relate to the world," suddenly abandoned the role of the introverted artist and presented himself and his fantasies **live** to live audiences, risking rejection, misunderstanding, moral outrage—even acceptance.

He had come to identify fully with his fantastic creations, and in so doing, developed a new art form—one in which the artist **became his own art**.

Vaughn mounted the concept on the audio-visual technique of projecting slides of individual panels on a screen while delivering a narrative barrage of dialogue and sound effects to his audience. It was something to experience. He did not merely read the parts of the characters—he became them! He took on their voices, dialects, prejudices, needs and desires.

Vaughn nervously blundered and stumbled through the first wave of performances, literally turning his introverted nature inside out to get the job done. Again, he did it. And touched his audiences with a kind of magic they had never known before.

He took the concert to colleges, universities and conventions across the country and in Europe. He scored heavily last year when he won the Yellow Kid Award at the International Comics Congress in Lucca, Italy, then went on to perform the concert in the Louvre in Paris. (Vaughn told me later he learned the concert phonetically in French in an attempt to "sell it" with more impact, but the results bombed by distracting too much from the presentation. He went back to a standby translator and had the usual spectacular success.)

In late Spring of this year, I decided to put together an all-comics issue of **MEDIASCENE** spotlighting the foremost personalities in the business. I called Vaughn to discuss the idea with him; discovered he'd been thinking along the same lines, and was somewhat surprised when he insisted on doing the piece himself.

Who knew da Bode better than da Bode himself?

He wanted desperately to tell the world about the real Vaughn Bode (**Schizophrenia** featured a cartoon confession that revealed him as "autosexual, heterosexual, homosexual, masso-sexual, sado-sexual, trans-sexual, uni-sexual, omni-sexual") but agonized over the decision to say it straight out in a legit magazine feature. He was concerned that his fans and followers would be turned off by the revelation. I assured him that they wouldn't, knowing that they were already attuned to his philosophy, humor and instincts. He agreed, and wrote what has since become the most important work either of us had published.

Vaughn was delighted with the resulting feature, and, in fact, incorporated it into his Cartoon Concert performance at the July Comic Art Convention. Cons are always chaotic, but somehow Vaughn and I managed to spend an evening together. That night, we ate more ice cream than either of us have ever had at one time in our whole lives. Somewhere between refills, he revealed that he was about to sign with the William Morris Agency for a Cheech Wizard film, then planned to go to Paris where he hoped to write a rock opera for himself. He was also completing arrangements to set up The Church of Cheech Wizard, a non-profit project which would allow anyone to worship anything they pleased at any time. He was trying to fulfill his self-appointed role as "messiah."

The following day, I saw him for the last time.

About two weeks later, I received a phone call which I refused to believe—so I called Vaughn's apartment in San Francisco. Jeff Jones answered and told me it was true. Vaughn had died on Friday, July 18, 1975.

In the days that followed, a wave of phone calls came in, each trying to clarify the rumors that had begun circulating. There were a half dozen versions of the tragedy, and I didn't learn the complete truth until I spoke with Vaughn's brother, Vincent, in San Diego at the end of July.

Vaughn's death was accidental, caused by a bizarre method of "Meditation" he had developed. Using a belt, he would insert one end through the buckle and position the loop around his neck. The free end of the belt was taken over a high structure (in this case, a chinning bar across a doorway) and pulled with both hands, which would tighten the noose and cause Vaughn to lose consciousness through strangulation. At that point, he would release the belt and fall to the floor, while the loop expanded to allow him to breathe naturally in an unconsciousness state. He had done this four times previously.

This time, in addition to his gown, he wore two velvet neck chokers and a bondage mask. He had arranged pillows on the floor on which to fall. During the ritual, the velvet chokers tangled and prevented the loop from expanding. He was discovered where he had fallen by his lady, Diane, and his son, Mark. A small service was held on Tuesday, July 22. Vaughn would have been 34 that day.

It is pointless to look for any kind of sane reason to this tragic accident. It is my belief, however, that the real essence of a human being is more than just a hundred and some odd pounds of flesh and bone. Instead, that essence is embodied in the thoughts, ideas and creations produced during a life time. Only these endure as the sum of an individual when all else is gone.

As long as his words and pictures continue to exist, Vaughn will be with us.

Vincent Bode is continuing to tour with the Cartoon Concert, spreading the word of Cheech Wizard to open minds everywhere. The portrait of Vaughn in his leathers which appears on this page was painted by Vincent, and is his gift to everyone who loved da Bode and his work. ●

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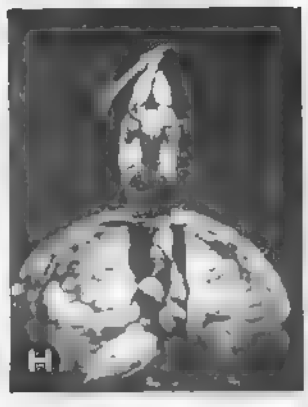

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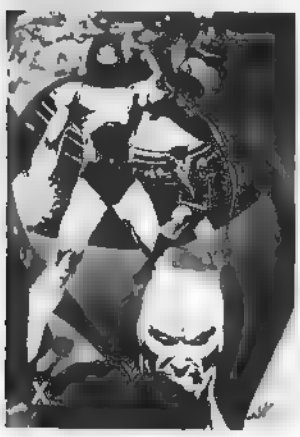

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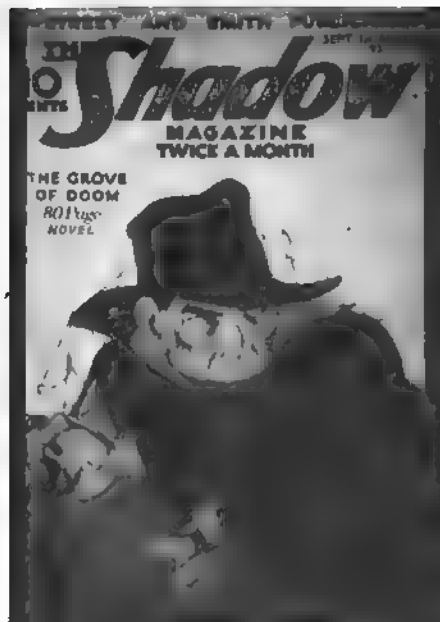

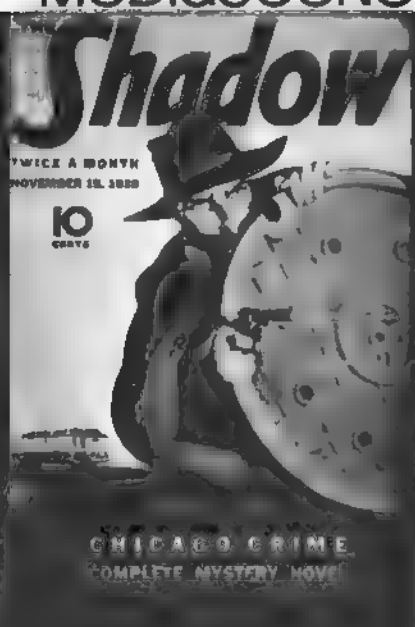

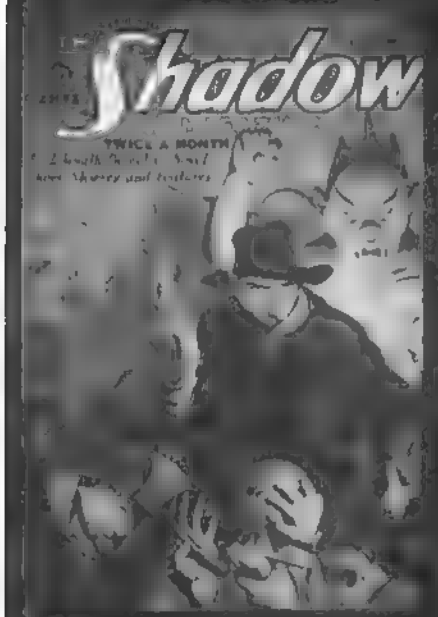

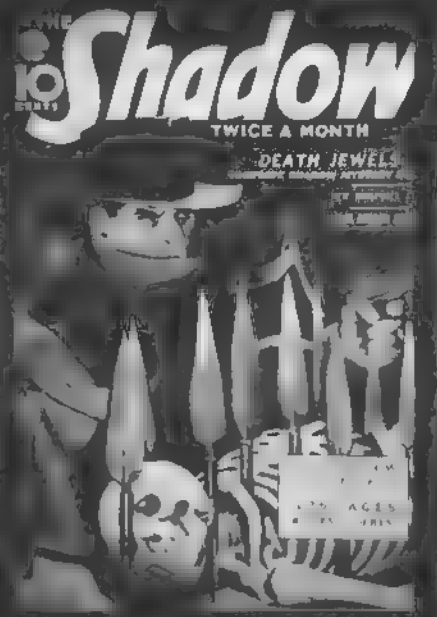

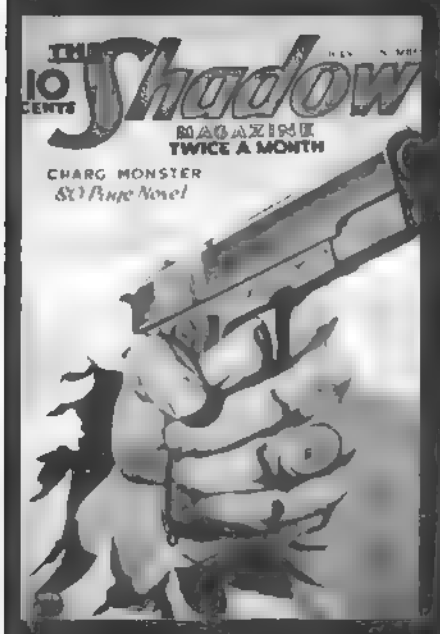

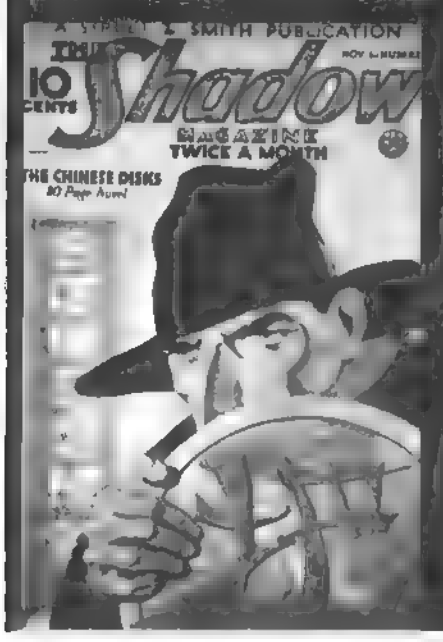

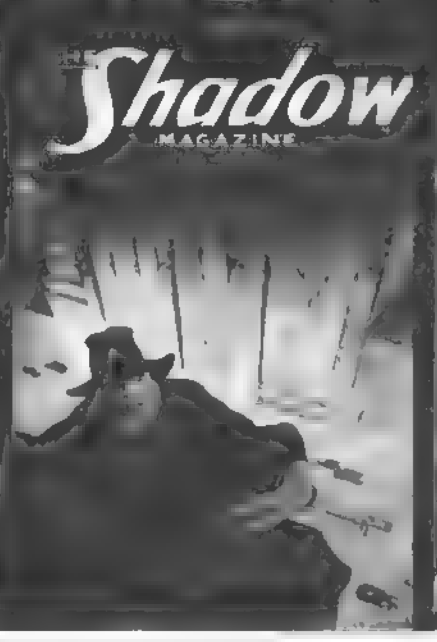

...down the corridors of the publishing world for over twenty five years.

And why not?

He was the most successful character ever to appear in the ragged-edged pages of the pulp magazines of the 1930's and 40's. He blazed his way through twice as many episodes as his rivals did with the help of several secret identities, a regiment of underground agents, unlimited wealth, dozens of gadgets and the usual skill, strength and daring. He was the forerunner of every hero from Batman to James Bond. No wonder he laughed. The Shadow had every reason to!

In the opening installment (MEDIASCENE II) of THE RETURN OF THE HERO, The Shadow's creator, Walter Gibson, told how it all came about. Here, he continues to recount the legend of the pulps' most fantastic crimefighter.

●I can't recall adhering to a fixed writing schedule during the formative period of the Shadow stories. Once I had the elements of a plot in mind, I would start typing and after a few chapters, my output of words would become rapid indeed. All my work was first draft, the way I had turned out copy as a reporter on the Philadelphia **North American** and later the **Evening Ledger**, prior to my entry into the syndicate field. If a chapter needed to be rewritten, I could do that afterward, but it seldom happened with the early novels, as they ran to 75,000 words or more, and didn't have to be tightened.

Beginning with the sixth Shadow novel, the length was cut to 60,000 words to allow for more short stories in the magazine, which would be a help if it should change over to a monthly basis.

By then, the second issue was on the newsstands, with a print run twice the size of the first. That, plus the fact that magazine sales lagged during the summer months, indicated that the supply would be more than ample; perhaps too much more. The first number had been dated April—June; the second was July—September; and the third would be October—December, which

the shadow took over in person

would tell the tale where The Shadow's future was concerned. Since I was about four issues ahead, there was no rush to deliver more while editors were away on vacations. I had been working at intervals on the Houdini book; now I gave it my full time until it was nearly completed. Then a long-distance call came from Street & Smith, saying to rush the next Shadow novel. The second issue had sold out like the first, so the magazine was to go monthly with the October number.

From there, The Shadow practically took over in person. I began turning out his 60,000-word adventures on a three-week basis, introducing new factors in nearly every issue. I spent more time on the plots, but often I was thinking one or two stories ahead, so the

...them. During breaks, I checked on guns, gems, cults, wills, spies, ghosts, morgues and all sorts of deadly devices that The Shadow might encounter. I briefed myself on unusual localities and strange legends that would intrigue readers into wanting more.

Instead of being cramped for time, I found that the stepped-up schedule increased my rate of output. The first two thousand words of my daily quota were just a warm-up, and frequently I hit my peak around the five-thousand mark. This was at variance with the opinions of many writers who felt that anywhere from a thousand to fifteen hundred words was a good day's stint. In due deference, I might have shared their view, if I hadn't been forced into a more

I provided the shadow with new agents

exacting schedule; and again, the continuity of The Shadow stories was conducive to speedy writing. As the tempo of a story increased, I found that I could carry it over to the next day, and in some instances into the next novel, all of which increased my enthusiasm for my work.

I began pitting The Shadow against adversaries who were worthy of his mettle, such as The Silent Seven, The Black Master, Double Z, The Blackmail Ring, The Ghost Makers, The Five Chameleons and Kings of Crime. All made good titles in their own right and to thwart their vicious designs, I provided The Shadow with new agents, who teamed with Harry Vincent, whenever and however required. The Shadow himself appeared openly in various guises as well as disguises, but for his convenience and my continuity, he adopted the personality of Lamont Cranston as his principal **alter ego.** As an habitue of the Cobalt Club, Cranston established a close friendship with Police Commissioner Ralph Weston, who was a fellow member; and Cranston was often present when the commissioner received confidential reports from Inspector Joe Cardona, who had begun as a headquarters detective in **The Living Shadow** and had gone up the ladder ever since.

One agent whom The Shadow constantly contacted while in the guise of Cranston was Clyde Burke, a reporter on the New York **Classic.** Later, The Shadow was to enlist another recruit in the person of Moe Shrevnitz, popularly known as "Shrevvy," a cab driver who was constantly at his chief's service. Going in or out of the Cobalt Club, The Shadow frequently changed to Lamont Cranston or vice versa in the commodious confines of his own limousine, which was piloted by a chauffeur named Stanley, who never fully realized what was taking place, but when The Shadow was really on the move, Shrevvy's cab was far preferable for his quick changes.

When The Shadow required gadgets, I took pains to make them

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valid, I patterned his escapes from traps on those found in Houdini's own notes. The Shadow was skilled in climbing cliffs or buildings in the fashion of a human fly; but when he encountered a wall too sheer and smooth to allow finger grips or toe holds, I supplied him with a set of suction cups, like those used in "Walking Upside Down" beneath the dome of a theater, as described in my old syndicate article. He could cast a hawkish silhouette on a wall, making crooks think he was still around, only to find that he was gone when they surged to the attack.

I applied the techniques of stage illusions to the shadow

Often I applied the techniques of stage illusions to some of The Shadow's disappearances. Gangsters once spotted his cloaked figure bulging from a curtained alcove and riddled it with bullets. But when they snatched off the cloak from the fallen form, it proved to be a skeleton that The Shadow had brought from a handy medical lab and left in place of himself. That scene was turned into the cover picture for an issue that became another sellout. In another story, I stationed The Shadow in a stack of huge truck tires outside of a garage. By thrusting his automatic muzzles between the tires, he drove off a horde of gunmen whose own shots failed to penetrate his improvised pill-box. When finally sure that he was out of ammunition, the gunners charged **en masse** and snatched away the tires from the top of the stack to the bottom, only to find that The Shadow again was gone.

I sent that story on to Blackstone the magician, along with some appropriate suggestions. Before the season was over, Blackstone was presenting a stage illusion in which a girl crawled into a rack of tires, only to vanish when the tires were rolled away and formed into an upright stack, from which she reappeared. Blackstone continued to perform the tire illusion as an outstanding feature of his show throughout his career as America's foremost magician.

When The Shadow was trapped under the looming gun muzzles of gloating, trigger-happy crooks, he managed to stay his execution momentarily by raising his ungloved hands with palms wide open. A thrust of his right hand, with a snap of its thumb and fingers—and a loud blast, accompanied by a vivid flash and a puff of smoke, wiped the leers from their evil faces. Blinded, the staggered would-be assassins recoiled, with their puny guns popping harmlessly upward, while The Shadow, whipping a brace of .45 automatics from beneath his cloak, slugged his way through his stupefied foemen, turning himself from victim to victor.

Whenever The Shadow staged that caper, I would supply a footnote (signed by Maxwell Grant) stating that The Shadow used two highly potent chemical substances to produce the blast—so potent, in fact, that to reveal their composition might prove disastrous. Today there are Shadow "buffs" who hark back to those days before they were born and wonder why such an impossibility was thrust upon them under the head of scientific fact. It may surprise them to learn that this startling effect was listed by magic dealers under the title of the "Devil's Whisper" and was guaranteed to wake up any audience when a magician walked on stage and snapped his fingers to prove that he was there.

It went off the market after a Chicago magic dealer demonstrated it for a customer, using several times the recommended amount. He lost his hand in the blast, which knocked both men unconscious. People arriving on the scene found the office so badly damaged that they thought a time bomb had exploded there.

the stories themselves underwent stages of development

The introduction of new characters and specialized devices was not a hurry-up job. Instead, it extended over many months and eventually ran into a dozen years. The stories themselves underwent gradual stages of development, all for the better, if judged in terms of circulation, which eventually topped 300,000 per issue. The Shadow Club, composed of 50,000 constant readers, demanded new surprises and stunning climaxes; and as time went on, polls were taken, listing the novels that the club members liked best. Even the villains were to have their share at outvying one another in popularity. To appreciate this fully, we must look back to those early days when The Shadow went monthly and see what happened from there on.

When I delivered the very first Shadow story, it was assigned to John L. Nanovic, one of the newer editors at Street & Smith. Since John and I were both fresh in the field, our literary tastes were untrammeled by the stereotyped conventions that made so many pulp magazine stories read like warmovers. Naturally, we recognized the basic formula that the market demanded: the stories had to be direct, exciting and strong on action as well as surprises. But to inject one element at the expense of another was not only injurious to both, it could detract from the validity of the story as well as its overall impact.

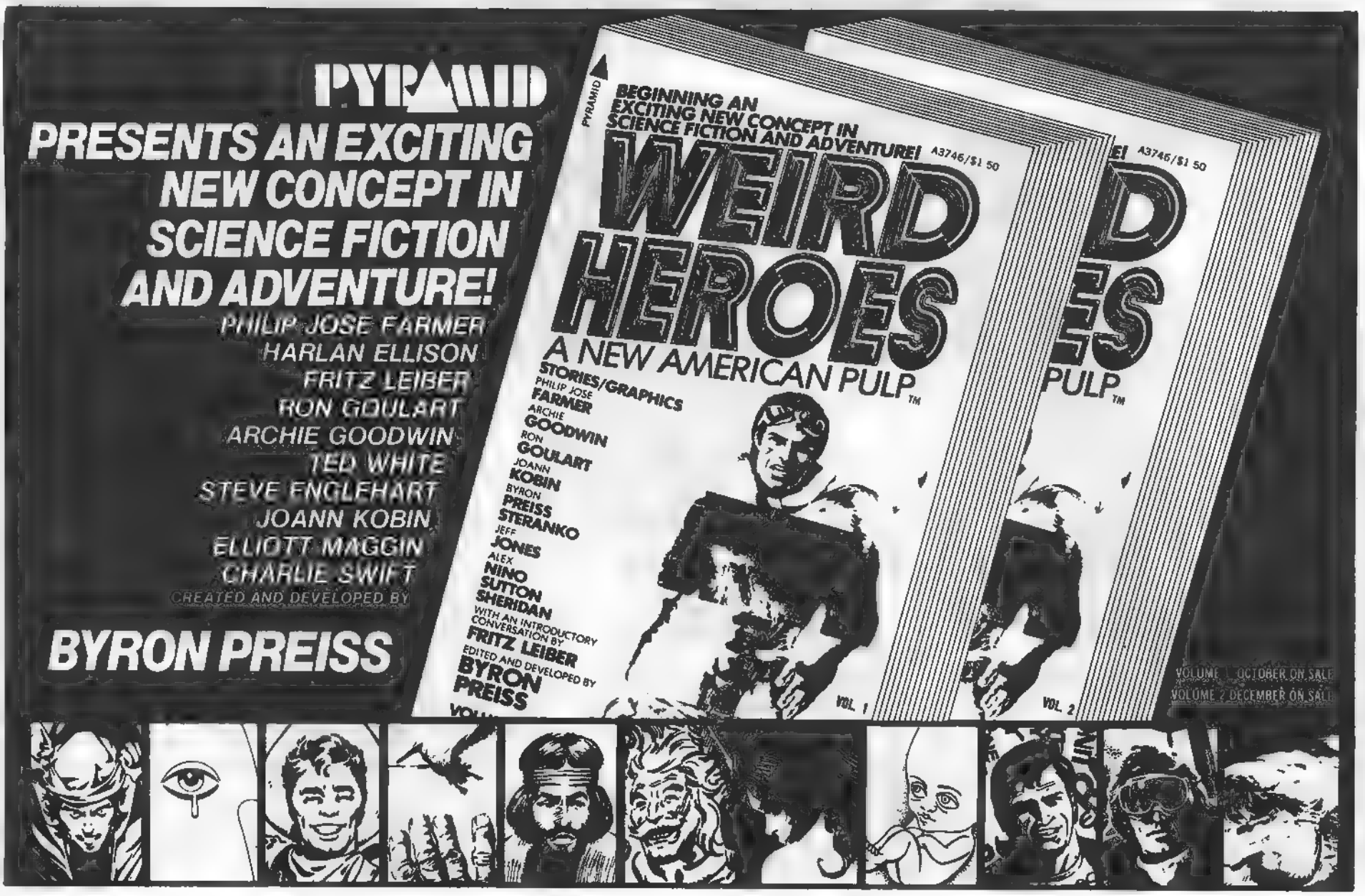
As a character, The Shadow was different; and so were his novels. They invited situations that violated some of the outworn pulp taboos and gave them a distinctive touch. John recognized this and went along with it to a marked degree, introducing editorial changes largely to keep a story within bounds, without disturbing its continuity.

As he went over a story, he would mentally file every trifling mention or bit of dialogue that might have a bearing on the plot and link it up when the right time arrived. As a result, instead of blue-penciling an important item in a lagging paragraph, he would stress it to impress it on the reader. If he had questions, they were equally vital, which proved a tremendous help to authors where novel-length stories were concerned.

I did all the shadow novels on a first draft basis

To keep up production, I did all the Shadow novels on a first-draft basis, red-hot out of the typewriter, with no rewrites if I could help it. I had gone beyond the chapter-by-chapter system and had each story fully, though roughly, outlined before I began it, though there were some rather sketchy stretches between the high spots. With 60,000 words as a quota, the stories had to be tighter and with The Shadow strongly developed as the lead character, the plots and devices had to be more elaborate if ingenious, to keep ahead of the regular readers, who expected The Shadow's next exploit to top all that had preceded it.

The conclusion of The Return of The Pulp Hero will appear soon in a future issue of MEDIASCENE. The adventures of The Shadow are currently available in paperback from Pyramid Books.



THE MAD WORLD OF JACK DAVIS

After Norman Rockwell, Jack Davis is probably next in line as America's most popular artist. Over the past ten years, he's unquestionably done more movie posters, billboards, magazine covers, record jackets, advertising illustrations and animated cartoons than any three of his contemporarys put together.

His work is characterized by clusters of celebraties, all unerringly caricatured in the unmistakable Davis manner—eyes bug out of sockets; tongues flap from open mouths; fingers are long, gnarly appendages. Feet match. A few stray flies inevitably circle their prey. The Davis trademark is almost always in evidence: a wild, zany, stampeding herd of humanity that would surely traumatize any other artist.

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Davis himself is the antithesis of his style: a 6'3" dignified, gray-templed gentleman who looks like a corporate attorney for General Motors after just being coached in mild manneredness by Jimmy Stewart. He can be found more often at poolside or on a golf course than at the drawing board. With Davis, the name of the game is speed.

"If one of my drawings looks sketchier than another," admits Davis, "it's only because I got what I wanted with less rendering or detail. I don't try to give my work a quick-sketched look or to contrive looseness. That would be defeating the purpose of illustration. To work fast and direct, I give the drawing a chance to grow from an unrestricted beginning. Action drawing implies sudden movement; my approach, I think, should go the same way."

On numerous occasions Davis has completed full-color illustrations with many figures in less than eighteen hours, from picking the job up to delivery time. Again, Davis delivers more than a fast job. His numerous awards from art directors' clubs attest to the quality of his work. It's both factors—speed and quality—that have facilitated his success.

"I'm always fighting a deadline," the 49-year old artist confesses. "Especially since I've gotten into advertising work. Many of the people who give me assignments are old **Mad** readers who remember my work. They call me when they have a crazy job with a lot of action or exaggeration. It's almost always short deadline stuff, most of the time having probably been used up trying to convince the client that a wild, funny approach wouldn't make his business collapse. If it isn't a short deadline, I put it off until the last minute and make it a short deadline. I guess I just need the pressure. If the phone doesn't ring and guys aren't yelling at me, I just kind of wander off and throw the football around with the kids.

"My early drawing days were nothing special," remembers Davis. "They were like hundreds of other stories you've heard. I started out copying popular comic characters like Popeye and Henry. Later on I did some work for the high school annual in Atlanta, Georgia, where I was born and raised. And still later, while stationed in Guam, I drew a Sad Sack type comic character called 'The Boondocker' I'd created for the **Navy News**."

In 1946 Jack was discharged and entered the University of Georgia on the G.I. Bill. He drew for the college paper and humor magazine and during his summer vacations, worked on a sports strip for an Atlanta newspaper. Then an important assignment from the Coca-Cola company netted him enough money to buy a car and finance a trip to New York City. After pounding the pavement for six months (and having his car stolen), he was ready to heave his brushes into the Hudson River. Eventually he joined the staff of the **New York Herald Tribune** and inked the syndicated newspaper strip, The Saint, for a year.

Finally, he was discovered by E.C. and spent the next half dozen years concentrating completely on comic books. Before long he became one of the highest paid comic illustrators.

Visual people who "think with a pencil" can communicate an impression while "at a loss for words." Davis is of this genre. Like many artists he deals in sensory impressions that often lack concrete verbal definition. He can "see" a solution to the problem without necessarily being able to describe it.

Davis explains: "For an artist, showing is always better than talking. A drawing can bridge minds, miles, even languages. For example, while in Surinam with some of the guys from **Mad**, we were asked to address a schoolroom of kids. They didn't know our language just as we didn't know theirs. We stood in front of the room and they just looked at us, not knowing what to make of it all. So I picked up a piece of chalk and drew a picture of Mickey Mouse on the blackboard. I figured that might break the ice, but they just looked puzzled. The teacher did his best to explain to us that without TV and movies, the kids didn't know who Mickey Mouse was. So I quickly did a caricature of the teacher. The kids broke up. The picture talked their language even though we didn't."

The picture can also help establish communication in areas where the language is the same. Art directors, working by intuition, often put together interesting concepts without knowing exactly what they want shown in the illustrations. Give Davis a pencil, scratch pad and a few moments and he'll have the answer. He is able to sit down with a script, read it, and start to rough out the complete story on layout sheets in a matter of minutes. The drawings are only a guide. Visual notes made from first impressions, they are nonetheless incisive and funny. The temptation is always to let Davis ink them right then and there, and start him on another story.

He prefers pen to brush, but finds that the brush is a faster tool. His choice depends on the job.

"I associate brush work with comics," offers Davis. "When I'm doing a job that needs a comics look a #3 or #4 Winsor & Newton red sable watercolor brush is my thing. My brush technique is a carryover from comic book days, and I can pencil and ink a three-page Superfan episode in an afternoon. With a pen it might take me a whole day."

In his color work, he applies glazes with colored inks or Grumbacher solid watercolor with white tempera or perhaps with Prismacolor pencils. He utilizes the texture from the pencil in some passages, but dilutes it with clear water for others. Acrylics have been added to Davis' wide range of techniques and he doesn't hesitate to use any medium necessary. His comment when questioned about color markers, "I like 'em—they're fast," was no surprise.

A successful action drawing is more than an illustration depicting movement. There should be at least a hint of what could or will happen —or what couldn't or won't happen —as a result of the action. The implied conditional action adds drama and excitement to the scene as well as prolonging the picture's timing. A football player, for instance, runs through the scattered bodies of opposing players to face a giant lineman. This tells us where the player has been, what he's done, where he is now, and what might happen if the opposition gets him. This scene can be depicted in one illustration, combining both the implied future and past with the specific present.

"I exaggerate action in a drawing to clarify as much as to entertain," explains Davis. "When you push the action a little more in the direction it's already going, the reader becomes more aware of what's happening. For instance, in a western saloon brawl scene I'll make sure my figures have an exaggerated follow-through when throwing a punch. I'll show molars flying and wigs popping off heads. I'll really demolish a chair over someone's head. It's funnier because it's burlesque.

"Even when drawing a figure in a rather quiet pose or setting (like a newscaster for **TV Guide**) I exaggerate the pose. I draw the feet longer and out of proportion with the rest of body, etc. Needless to say, I exaggerate the features, as would any caricaturist. I try to get the same mood this person usually gets when you see him, but with a light touch."

Jack Davis does something else, too. He adds an appealing quality, a style, that brings his two-dimensional surfaces to life. He's a warm, sensitive man whose illustrations are created to delight, not offend. Mix this with his remarkable talent and you have a recipe for success.
Joel Thingvall

A note of thanks to Nick Meglin, of **Mad Magazine**, for allowing us to dip generously into the text of his book, **The Art of Humorous Illustration.**

THE SHADOW KNOWS

that thousands of readers have been clamoring to learn more about his fantastic adventures—and he's doing something about it! The Shadow is rallying all those who've thrilled to his exploits over the years to reveal a top priority organization called **THE SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY**. For the first time in over 25 years, the Master of Darkness is opening the roll so that YOU can become a trusted agent in his cause of justice and honor. As an agent, a special **MEMBERSHIP KIT** is waiting for you NOW! ● The **SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY** is exclusively for those who have followed his crusade and keep pace with all against the forces of injustice. As a member of the **SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY**, you'll become a licensed agent in the Shadow network of operators. As proof, you'll carry a unique midnight black **IDENTIFICATION CARD** bearing The Shadow's likeness on one side—and **YOUR OWN EXCLUSIVE INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION NUMBER ON THE OTHER!** ● Also included is the **SECRET SOCIETY BADGE** to be worn for purposes of identification included with every membership kit, this is the equivalent of the original club's Shadow Pin—try to find one today! ● A **SPECIAL BULLETIN**, packed with art and articles also comes with the kit and features a look at everything from the pulp and radio adventures of yesterday to the books [illegible] today. ● [illegible] complete **MASTER CHECKLIST** of the Shadow's pulp novels will accompany each kit. Taken from the Secret Files of Maxwell Grant, the list features titles and dates along with an appropriate space to check off each book as it is added to your collection. ● The entire membership kit comes in a **SPECIALLY ILLUSTRATED ENVELOPE**. REMEMBER: all members are entitled to attend exclusive club activities such as exhibits, lectures, displays and meetings simply by showing the official I.D. CARDS. ● Membership kits will NOT be available in stores or shops anywhere. Become a member of the **SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY** today! Send $2.00 plus .50 postage and handling—and Burbank will [illegible] immediately!

THE SHADOW
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I want to know what evil lurks in the hearts of men! Here's my application for admittance into THE SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY. Enclosed find $2.00 plus .50 postage and handling. Send my MEMBERSHIP KIT immediately! !

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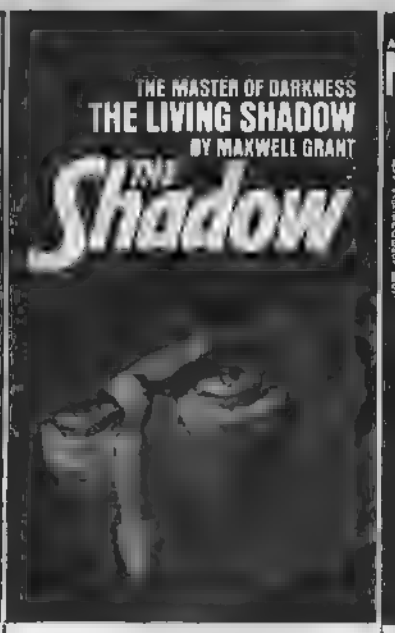

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Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows, and you can too, if you keep up with his latest exploits, now available in paperback form. You can get the first six Shadow paperbacks in a **Deluxe Boxed Set** for only $6.00 and .50 postage and handling. This set contains The Living Shadow, Hands in the Dark, Mobsmen on the Spot, The Black Master, Double Z and the Crime Cult, all packaged in a distinctive custom storage box. A special Shadow collector's item for every dedicated follower of the greatest pulp detective ever!

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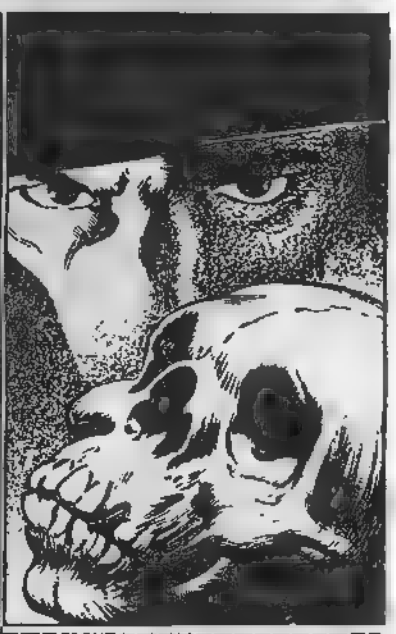
Revealed at last! The secrets and origins of the greatest crimefighters of the 30's Pulp Era. Take a penetrating look behind the masks of such mythic crime-crushers as The Shadow, Doc Savage, The Spider Operator #5, The Phantom Detective, The Avenger and many more. MEDIASCENE 14 reveals their inspirational sources, illustrated with a wealth of original pulp covers in a special pulp-oriented issue, highlighted by a cover and a poster-sized Shadow centerspread by Steranko which introduces the Shadow Secret Society. This issue is selling fast, so get your copy today!



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AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

Mediascene

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Bernie Wrightson.

If Lovecraft and Poe had been artists and created their works during the 1960's and 1970's, they would have been working in the same areas as Wrightson.

Wrightson.

The ultimate story-teller of the bizarre.

Dark shadows and brooding rooms rotting with decay. And characters enacting their dramas on these decadent stages, that match the decor. Tall, emanciated figures with haunted looks in their eyes that bespeak of terrible pasts.

Wrightson is tall himself, with dark hair and huge hands, but he isn't one of those characters. His blue eyes burn brightly, indicating a passion and intensity of aesthetics that belie his outwardly calm movements. There is a gentle quality about Wrightson, and that is a trait marked in some of his characters. The gentle ones who became victims of dark forces and circumstances that they cannot control or effect. The everyman. You. Me. All of us. A sense of pathos [illegible]

Wrightson.

He sits and answers questions patiently, sometimes actually involved in the questions, but more often indicating a retiring nature who is not sure what the fuss is all about or why he should be the one being interviewed.

MEDIASCENE: Is it true, Bernie, that you once passed up the chance to play a bunny rabbit on a school stage?

WRIGHTSON: I didn't really pass it up. Another guy beat me out.

MEDIASCENE: What is this fascination you have for bunny rabbits?

WRIGHTSON: I'm a Bugs Bunny freak. I love Bugs Bunny and whatever other bunnies there are. Any [illegible] drawing funny animals strips, not the straight material.

MEDIASCENE: Do you think the animation field, Disney and the Warner Brothers cartoons done by Chuck Jones and Freleng, among others, have influenced your work at all?

WRIGHTSON: [illegible] you wouldn't recognize that influence immediately if you were just scanning over my work. I watch Bugs Bunny at four o'clock or whenever it comes on and go back to work when the show is finished. When I go back to work I'm very excited, and I'll sit down at the drawing board and grind away. Don't you find that strange? I do.

MEDIASCENE: Let's ask a more traditional question: How did you get your start in comics? I'll bet that's a question you haven't been asked before.

WRIGHTSON: Never. But if you really want to know, I started with [illegible] I drew the story for a fanzine, they printed it, and I took the story around as a sample. Before I actually had a chance to display the material, Al Williamson happened to see it. I hadn't even met Al at the time, but he'd gotten a copy of the magazine from somewhere and he loved the story. Al showed it to Dick Giordano, who was an editor at National during that time, and Dick liked it, also. Dick then showed the story to Joe Orlando.

MEDIASCENE: What year was this?

WRIGHTSON: This was 1968, around the July Convention. Eventually, the story was seen by Carmine Infantino, after going through several people. Carmine liked it and said, "Where's this kid at. We'll give him work." Dick wrote me a letter saying that if I moved to New York, we can get you work in comics. So, I decided, why not, I wasn't doing anything in Baltimore anyway.

I blame it all on the e.c. comics

MEDIASCENE: You obviously had a fascination with comics before you drew "Uncle Bill's Barrel." Why do you like comics and what made you want to break into this field?

WRIGHTSON: Like many other people, I have to blame it on the E.C. Comics. I was just old enough to buy the E.C.s when they came out. Although, I didn't really buy them, because I was still too young to have any money, but I was there when they were around. I used to go up to the corner store and read them until the lady told me to leave. Those E.C. horror stories made a very big impression on me.

MEDIASCENE: Your material tends to be much more illustrative than many of the E.C. art styles, with a greater sense of mood and atmosphere. Almost as if you used the E.C. material as a springboard to develop into your own unique style.

WRIGHTSON: Actually, one artist at E.C. in particular, gave me that first urge to begin drawing. And that was Frazetta. Frazetta was very illustrative, and I tried to pick up on that aspect. I never got into a comic book style of drawing.

MEDIASCENE: Perhaps that's why your material tends to be so distinctive?

WRIGHTSON: Could be. Frazetta inspired me, but the influences since [illegible] a pastiche of everyone I look at.

MEDIASCENE: That's true of most artists. But even as far back as "Uncle Bill's Barrel," you were establishing your own art. And your fascination with horror was already evident. Did the E.C.s fire that enthusiasm for the macabre?

WRIGHTSON: The E.C.s twisted my head. It's something I never grew out of. I don't particularly like to be scared. And I don't particularly want to scare people. I think my horror stories are only superficially frightening.

MEDIASCENE: And yet, your art has a sense of mold and decay about it, things rotting away, a trait found oftentimes in the E.C. stories, but something you definately picked up on. Do you have a death wish of some kind?

WRIGHTSON: Might be. If so, I don't know about it. Or, if so, I don't know exactly what that wish is. But I don't consciously take this stuff very seriously. If you look at the material very closely, you'll note that there is a lot of black humor.

MEDIASCENE: After [illegible] "Uncle Bill's Barrel," was your first work done for D.C.?

WRIGHTSON: Yes. I started drawing filler stories for D.C.'s horror line. One of the stories happened to be written by Len Wein. It was an eight-pager, nothing more, fitted into a book with two other stories. That story was called "Swamp Thing" and it got immediate, terrific response. That issue of the book sold better than all past issues. It also received tremendous mail response. About a year and a half later, they decided to make a series out of the character.

MEDIASCENE: What did you do during the interrim?

WRIGHTSON: I kept doing the short horror stories.

MEDIASCENE: Here's another question that you've probably never been asked before. What are your feelings about the "Swamp Thing" series?

WRIGHTSON: I loved it. It is probably some of the best art I've ever done. I was talking with Len Wein about the series earlier today, and we decided that we have an incredible chemistry whenever we work together. And that chemistry really shows in the Swamp Thing stories. That's what made the series so special.

MEDIASCENE: In your story-telling, you use quite a bit of cinematic [illegible] for instance, go beyond the standard three panels, sometimes going [illegible] You use angle shots with amazing effectiveness. Are you influenced by the cinema greats likes Welles and Capra, as well as the newer directors? And is **Citizen Kane** one of your favorite movies as it seems to be for so many comic book people?

WRIGHTSON: Oh, yes. Everybody I know that works in comics are movie freaks. I can sit around with most anybody in the field and trade lines from old movies. And I keep up with the new films. I can't site specific instances where I use what I learn from the cinema and translate it into my work, but subliminally its mark is there. I don't go to a movie looking for a cinematic [illegible] all absorbed and eventually finds its way out onto the pages.

MEDIASCENE: Let's discuss the technical side of your work. What materials do you use, and are you consistent with certain types of material or do you experiment?

WRIGHTSON: It almost depends on whatever happens to be there at the time. If I have nothing else around but two-cent pencils from the drug store, I'll use them. If good drawing pencils are around though, I won't turn them down. The inking needs much more care. I usually use a number 2 or number 3 Winsor-Newton red sable. I have no idea what pens I use. I go to the art store and find the pen point that looks like the pen point I used on the last job that worked so well. I always forget to look at the number before I leave the house to go into the art store. I've got such a collection of pen-points, I guess because so many of them are similar.

MEDIASCENE: You work on different sizes of artboard. Your new project, the **Frankenstein** adaptation, is drawn much larger than your Marvel work. What kind of art boards do you use?

WRIGHTSON: I generally use a medium finish bristol board, two ply. That seems to take both brush and pen equally well. It's a good surface for both. If I know I'm going to do a job virtually all in [illegible]

MEDIASCENE: How do you make a decision as to what technique you're going to use for a story?

WRIGHTSON: Usually, I don't know when I start. If all I've got lying around is plate finish paper I'll draw it on that and that will practically decide that the finished product will be done in pen. Sometimes the story itself will suggest something. For black-and-white stories, I'll consider pen-work. For comic book work, I'll use a rougher surface board because the job will be pretty much all brushwork.

MEDIASCENE: Is there anything in particular that you are trying to communicate with your work to your audience?

WRIGHTSON: Not really. The only thing I really feel strongly about is that the story entertains. I feel the reason a comic book exists is to entertain. That's its sole purpose. [illegible] has failed entirely. No amount of social relevance or social comment is going to save it.

MEDIASCENE: Do you think the two can be combined?

WRIGHTSON: Yes. They have been. A notable example is the Green Lantern/Green Arrow series. A lot of stuff Marvel did—they're not doing it as much anymore—often worked.

MEDIASCENE: How did you feel about the Man Thing series from Marvel?

WRIGHTSON: I enjoyed the first [illegible] illustrated. After that, I never could become involved in the strip. I don't think anybody drew it as well as Gray. Ploog drew it very well, but it wasn't the same character somehow. I preferred Gray's version, but that may be because it was a black-and-white job rather than one done for a color comic. I just didn't care for the Man-Thing in color at all. But to tell the absolute truth, the only story I ever fully read was that first story, the one that Gray drew.

MEDIASCENE: Do you follow the comics much at all?

WRIGHTSON: No. Not really.

I like the freedom in comics

MEDIASCENE: Then you are much more into cinema and animation than comics, and yet you continue to work in this medium. Why is that?

WRIGHTSON: I like the freedom that you can have in comics. If I were in film, I would be severely limited as to what I could do. I'd have to work with a lot of other people. And depend on them. I've got a clear idea of what I want to do.

MEDIASCENE: What is that clear

idea?

WRIGHTSON: Now we come to the age-old problem of a totally visual person trying to verbalize about his visualization. It's damn near impossible. I have no idea what it is I want to do except that when I look at something that's not done the way I want it to be, I can tell you. And even at that point, I could only tell you that it isn't right. Or not even that, I guess. It's not the way I would do it.

MEDIASCENE: How do you prefer to work on a story. Would you rather have a detailed plot or would you rather talk the story idea out with the writer?

WRIGHTSON: I would rather talk it out with a writer. The way Len Wein and I work, either he or I come up with the premise. While working on that premise, we start batting ideas back and forth. When we get a very basic story-line, something that can fit into a sentence, we start expanding on that until it reaches the point where I can sit down and break the story down into pages.

MEDIASCENE: How do you feel about violence in comics. Some of your stories contain violent elements, and since you commented earlier that you felt comics are essentially an entertainment media, do you find that violence is entertaining?

WRIGHTSON: Action is entertainment.

MEDIASCENE: But there is a difference between action and violence. Jack Kirby is an action artist, in the purest comic book sense. Force lines indicate maximum impact when hero hits villain or vice versa, but it doesn't matter how hard the people are hit or what they are hit with, no one really gets hurt. But if someone gets hit in a Bernie Wrightson story, especially in the horror stories, normally their brains are dashed out on the floor. Now I'm not comparing you to Sam Peckinpah, but there is a difference between your graphics on violence and Kirby's graphics on action.

WRIGHTSON: By that definition, my stories are violent. But in the horror stories that I draw, the characters I portray are closer to real people than Kirby's. Or much of the Marvel stuff. A lot of the Marvel books feature super-heroes which means that the guy throwing the punch is super strong in the first place and the guy on the receiving end, just as importantly, is also super strong. He can take it. It's like two brick walls hitting each other. All it amounts to is a lot of swinging and punching and flashing lights and force lines. I prefer cause-and-effect. I prefer every action to have an equal and opposite reaction, which is if someone hits you over the head your brains fall out on the floor. And you die. By bleeding to death.

MEDIASCENE: I didn't mean the question as condemnation. I'm not known, myself, as the most non-violent writer in comics.

WRIGHTSON: I didn't take it with condemnation. Action and violence is such a hard damn thing to define. Trying to look at my work objectively, I wouldn't think it overly violent. I think it has a lot of mood. I think any violence that happens is justifiable violence.

MEDIASCENE: Well, violence can't be ignored since it is such a integral part of our society. But getting onto a more pleasant subject, how do you feel about sex in comics?

WRIGHTSON: Comics as they stand now are so sexless. They aren't geared toward sex. They're geared toward action. A lot of running around, leaping, fighting.

MEDIASCENE: Do you mean to say you've never done a story that has sexual overtones or undertones?

WRIGHTSON: Of course I have. But like I said, the whole system is built around such a sexless kind of world. I don't think about forcing some sex into a story. Anything that does get in is probably subliminal and I'm not aware of it anyway. That's very Freudian. I think the industry as it stands would have difficulty interjecting sex and make it work. And make it tasteful. Sure, you can do a sex comic book for the sake of doing a sex comic book.

MEDIASCENE: What I was referring to was that a story might have some sexual elements in it, psychologically or physiologically. It doesn't have to be an entire story-line devoted to two people screwing their brains out in a roach-infested bathroom, the kind of stuff done often times in the undergrounds. But an honest relationship, between a man and a woman,

I consider myself an entertainer

or any honest relationship between two people.

WRIGHTSON: Somehow, when it happens in a comic book I can't believe it. Everything else that is happening in there is so fantastic, and so utterly unbelievable—though you have to understand that you are presented with a unbelievable premise and you have to accpt it in order to read the story—that it becomes difficult to accept relationships between men and women in comics. It's like too much reality [illegible]

MEDIASCENE: I've noticed that in much of your work, most of the women that appear in these stories have a sultry sensuality. The clothing clings and it all looks soft and alluring. Almost a non-artificial sexuality about these women. They radiate it.

WRIGHTSON: Oh, sure. I deal, more or less, with real characters and try to make the women real.

MEDIASCENE: But your heroines don't tend to be as plain as the average woman.

WRIGHTSON: I know it. It's a super-sex routine. I have to admit to overdoing it an awful lot. And there's really no excuse. It's shame [illegible] shoot myself.

MEDIASCENE: What do you hope to accomplish in this medium? Or elsewhere?

WRIGHTSON: I really don't consider myself an entertainer, just like an actor or any sort of performer and that's literally all

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want to achieve in comics.

MEDIASCENE: You're working on several projects outside the major comic book companies? What are they? And do you think you'll veer toward more of these projects in the future?

WRIGHTSON: The project you're talking about is **Frankenstein.** Some people in France are starting comic book adaptations of classic novels. They will be published in hardback. They have never done comics before, but they think comics are very exciting as a story-telling medium. Which they are. I've seen one edition that's already done, **Treasure Island.** It's just gorgeous. Beautiful reproduction.

I've always wanted to do frankenstein

I've wanted to do **Frankenstein** since I was a kid. I saw the movie and then read the book and decided I wanted to draw it. And I'm finally getting the chance to do it. It's not only hardbound but it will be in full color. It will be 44-pages long, which is just about the right length.

MEDIASCENE: When you're working on singular pictures, posters and such, do you approach it with a different attitude than when you are telling a story in a comic book?

WRIGHTSON: No, no. If all I've got to work with is one picture I'll try to tell a story in that one picture. I'll try to arrange the elements in a very clear way.

MEDIASCENE: Do you like the movie or the novel version of the monster?

WRIGHTSON: I'm torn between the two. I really wouldn't know which I preferred.

MEDIASCENE: What else are you working on besides the **Frankenstein** project?

WRIGHTSON: I'm involved in doing a portfolio of illustrations from Edgar Allen Poe stories.

MEDIASCENE: Are you a Poe fan?

WRIGHTSON: Yes. I always have been. Poe's stories are some of my earliest reading.

MEDIASCENE: This goes back to your preoccupation with horror material. Poe, Frankenstein, the E.C.s.

WRIGHTSON: I blamed that on the E.C.'s but I guess it goes back farther than that, and it is a fascination I have for the horror genre. I'm sure the E.C.s helped feed it.

MEDIASCENE: Did you like the recent movie, **The Exorcist?**

WRGIHTSON: It was alright, but talk about scary movies. I recently saw **The Texas Chain Saw Massacre.** It is undoubtedly the most frightening movie I have ever seen. I saw it twice because the first time I saw it I couldn't believe I was that scared. I thought, "I'm having a bad day. What I had for breakfast didn't agree with me. And I'm seeing this movie on top of it and it's having a bad effect on me." So I went to see it a second time. I peed my pants. It scared the hell out of me. I don't think I ever want to see it again.

MEDIASCENE: And how do bunny rabbits fit into this world? Not the one of the **Chain Saw Massacre** but the ones you draw.

WRIGHTSON: Good question. I'm not sure I have an answer for it, but I like it, just like I like Bugs Bunny. Cartoons before and after **The Texas Chain Saw Massacre** might have helped. I like cartoons, I like schmaltzy thirties movies, I also like really horrendous horror movies.

MEDIASCENE: Let's get back to the Poe material. How do you decide which scene from a Poe story you are going to illustrate for a poster?

I survive on one page every two weeks

WRIGHTSON: The first thing that hits you with a Poe story is the punchline. The really gruesome end bits. Originally, I'd planned not to do the sensationalistic bits and do what anybody else could easily do, which is the punch-line of the story or the really gruesome scene. I'm going to pick something else out of the story and illustrate that. So I did that and came up with some of the most incredibly dull stuff you've ever seen. I can't say nothing happens in a Poe story except for the gruesome bit because that's certainly not true, but it will take a better man than me to draw it, so I ended up doing the classic scenes. I've got the last scene from "The Telltale Heart." The last scene of "The Cask of Armatillado" where the character puts the last brick in the wall. The scene where the guy is ready to cut the cat's eye out in "The Black Cat" will be in the portfolio. The orangatan leaping into the room from "Murders in the Rue Morgue" is another.

MEDIASCENE: Have you had any problems while working in comics?

WRIGHTSON: I used to. I used to have a lot of problems with Murray Boltinoff. He was constantly asking me to redraw things, things that I can't remember, but things that seemed very minor, and I was very irritated. I don't run into that problem much anymore. I don't know if it's that I swing that much weight in the industry or if I've conformed. Probably a combination of both.

MEDIASCENE: Do you want to do another series again?

WRIGHTSON: I enjoyed Swamp Thing. But it kind of got to me, doing it over and over again. I had nothing to look forward to but the same character. Or characters, every month.

MEDIASCENE: How much work do you like to do? A book every two months.

WRIGHTSON: That sounds about right. More likely, considerably less than that.

MEDIASCENE: Can you survive?

WRIGHTSON: Oh yeah! I can survive on one page every two weeks. I don't need a lot of money to survive.

MEDIASCENE: Do you still enjoy comics?

WRIGHTSON: They seem duller now. Maybe I've just lost that sense of wonder.

MEDIASCENE: I noticed that once I began working professionally in comics that some of that sense of wonder did vanish. You become involved in the technical and negative areas of comics, not that they are both synonomous, but when you are doing to stuff from a distance or trying to achieve the dream of breaking in, comics have sort of a dream quality about them. You're unaware of how demanding it is to turn out a series. And I can see what you mean about Swamp Thing even though you enjoyed working on it. The characters become like vultures lurking over your shoulders.

maybe I've lost that sense of wonder

WRIGHTSON: Swamp Thing was a bit like that, though it was nice that readers like bits that I wasn't satisfied with.

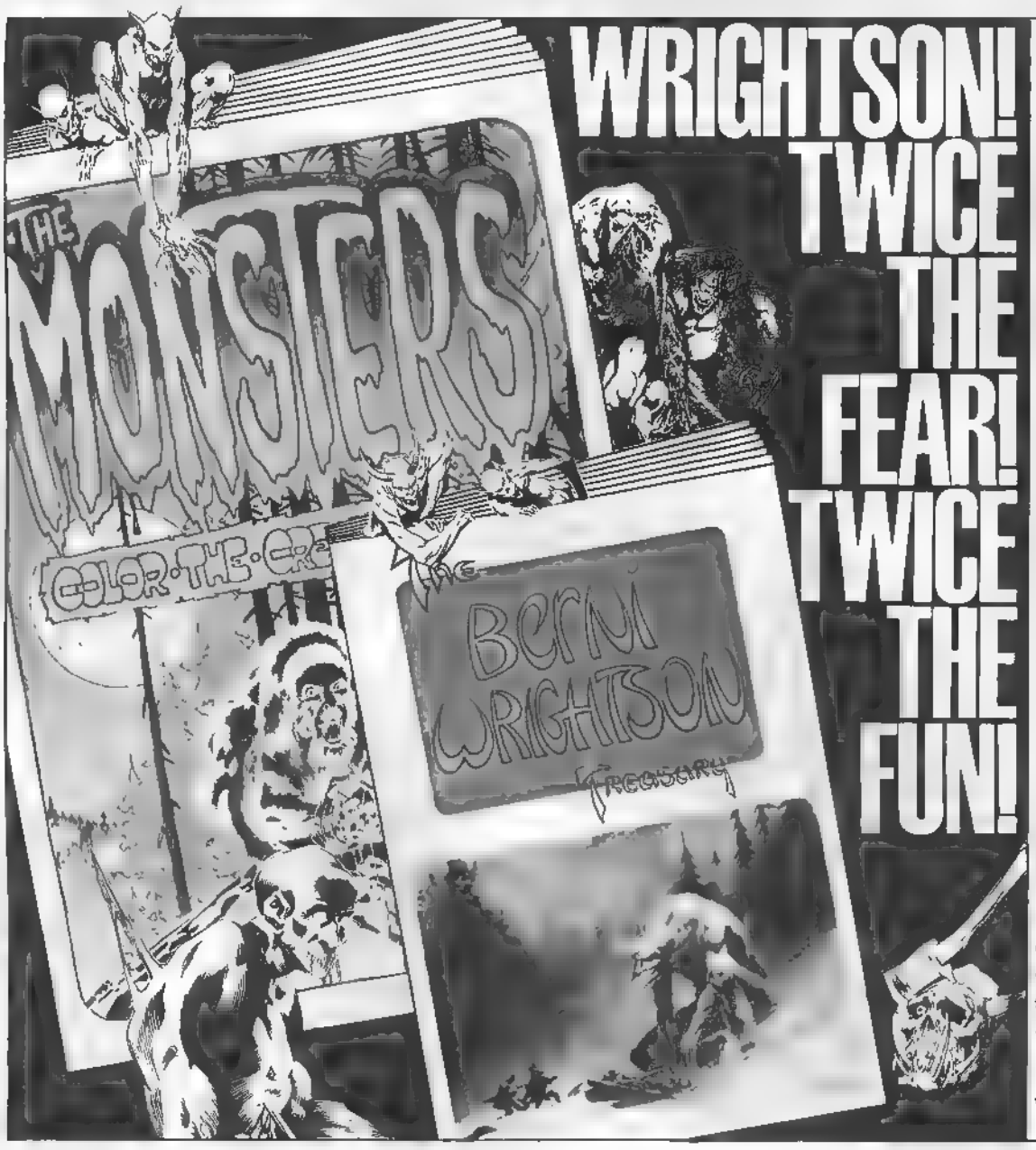
MEDIASCENE: Is there any last subject you'd like to speak on before we close this session.

WRIGHTSON: Not really. I'm not a terribly big talker.

MEDIASCENE: That's not what Steranko told me. He said you could talk endlessly.

WRIGHTSON: Ah, what does Jim know?

MEDIASCENE: We'll have to ask him some time. ●



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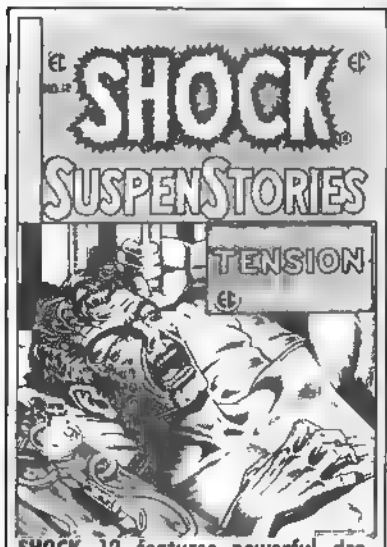
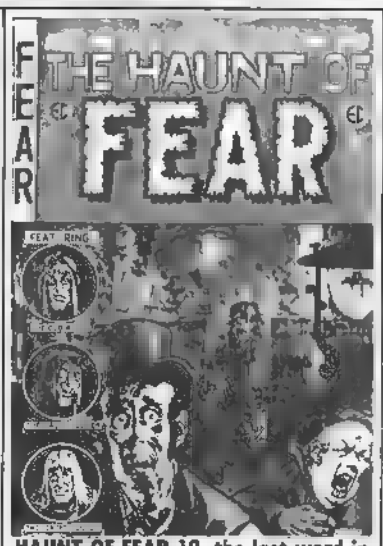
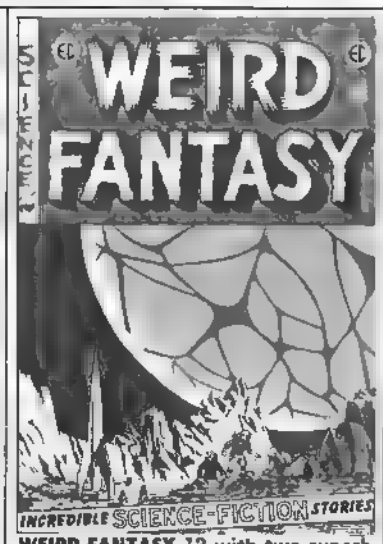


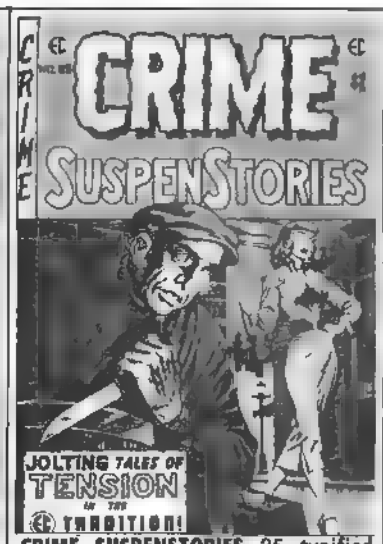
SHOCK 12 features powerful dramatic tales with electrifying endings like "The Monkey." Wood, Crandall, Orlando, Kamen.



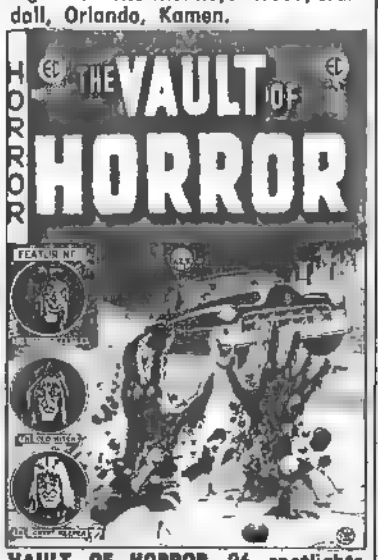
HAUNT OF FEAR 12, the last word in horror, with story and cover art by Ghastly Graham Ingels. Includes Jack Davis, Orlando, Johnny Craig.



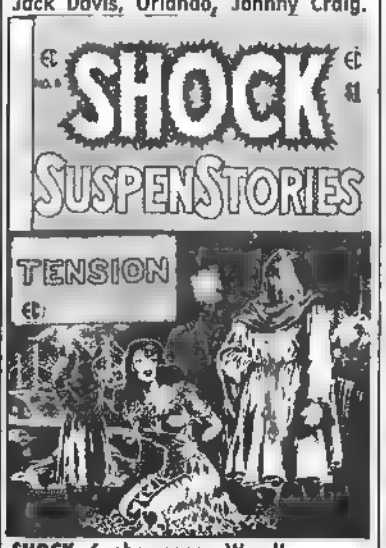
WEIRD FANTASY 13 with two superb sci-fi stories by Wally Wood. Cover and bio on Al Feldstein, with interior art by Joe Orlando and Jack Kamen.



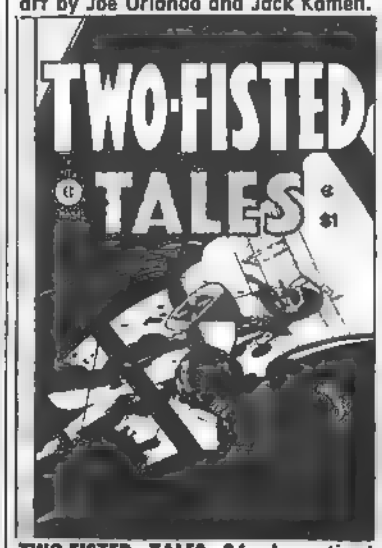
CRIME SUSPENSTORIES 25 typified high-tension dramas with shock endings. Crandall, George Evans, Bernie Krigstein, Kamen.



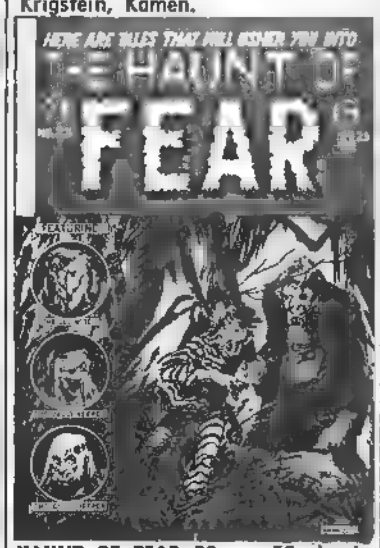
VAULT OF HORROR 26 spotlights four more fear tales including Jack Davis' nightmarish "Graft in Concrete." Ingels, Craig, Sid Check.



SHOCK 6 showcases Wood's sensative drama of Southern bigotry and intolerance, "Under Cover," others by Ingels, Orlando, Kamen.



TWO-FISTED TALES 34 dramatized knights in armor by Wood, a Davis western, an Evans air-war story, Severin legionaires!



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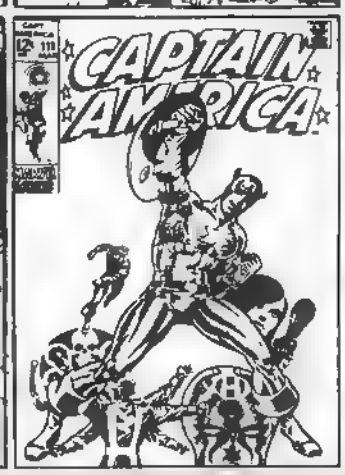

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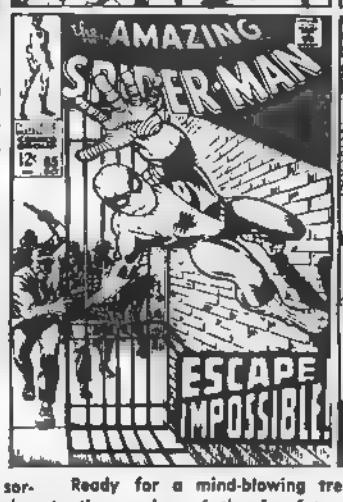

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Apparently not even the comics industry is safe from the merciless attack of shark fever being brought on by the $100 million hit, **Jaws.** Charlton Comics is negotiating to acquire the rights of this blockbuster movie, with plans to issue one-shot editions in both color and black-and-white magazine formats.

If and when they get the property, Nicola Cuti will script both adaptations, with Joe Staton illustrating the color story, and John Byrne handling the b&w. Just how both books will present the same

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adaptation without appearing repetitious is being worked out now, but the primary concern is to get on the "biggest movie ever" bandwagon while it's still hot.

Charlton has long held an interest in TV and movie tie-in comics (Hanna-Barbera cartoons, **Primus, The Partridge Family**, etc.), but the action-adventure field has generally eluded them. Now, with **Jaws** and **Space: 1999**, they may succeed in reviving the tie-in trend, which has more-or-less languished since the fifties. **Emergency, The Six Million Dollar Man** and **Star Trek** are also due to appear from Charlton soon, in both color and black and white, featuring art from the Neal Adams/Dick Giordano studio.

Bill Pearson, once publisher of **Witzend**, is now an assistant editor at Charlton, and has stated that the company is leaning rather heavily on these, and future movie deals, with plans to rush **Jaws** into production to garner the maximum amount of publicity.

the high price of success

Success or failure for these books, and Marvel's future film tie-ins, are very uncertain at this time however, primarily because the cost of adaptation rights (from hundreds to thousands of dollars) must be added to the art, writing, paper, ink, printing, shipping and distributing tariff. The fact that people may have forgotten about the film by the time the comic can be produced is also a powerful, yet seemingly negative, factor. Then again, if the **Jaws** audience consists of tens of millions of $4.00 ticketbuyers, surely the comics can rake off a hundred-thousand of the two-bit variety. Such thinking is obviously behind Marvel's giant Treasury-sized editions of **Oz** and **2001**, and the plans for sequels indicates that their comic life-span may even surpass the films'.

As for the specific progress of film tie-ins, the Jack Kirby written and drawn **2001** has been completed, and is being inked by Frank

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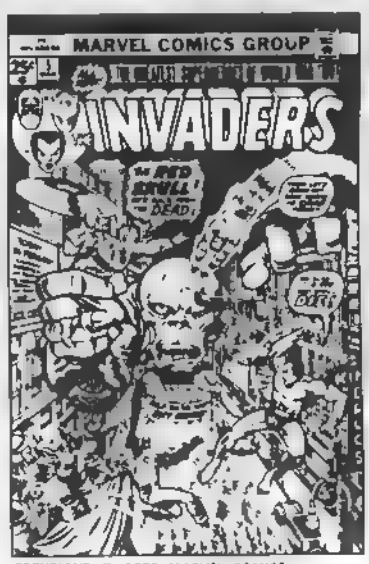
Giacoia, Dave Hunt and John Verporten. The special effects in the trip sequence are being colored by Jack personally, to weld the entire book into what he refers to as his "masterpiece." Work is already underway on the second book in this $1.50-sized quarterly series, continuing the adventures beyond **2001** in a space odyssey titled "Demon Seed."

Issue 1 of **2001** could go on sale by early January, but since that happens to be a low sales period, the book is being held back until the annual summer sales boom in July. Also appearing at approximately the same time will be a $1.50-sized edition of **Captain America**, featuring all new material, written and drawn by Kirby. As with the regular comic, the super-giant-sized **Cap** will have a Bicentennial theme, only this tale will be separate from the monthly storyline.



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Kirby is also hard at work on a brand-new project that is still under wraps, but involves a new variation on his famous Gods theme. Don't be too surprised if the word "Gods" appears in the title when the concept is ready for release. This entire project is currently top secret, even to Marvel staffers, but sources reveal that it concerns a group of brand-new heroes, loosely connected to the Marvel Universe, who may, allegorically resolve Jack's **New Gods** Trilogy begun at DC.

The Wizard of Oz book will have two first issues as a result of the Marvel-DC merger on the initial movie adaptation. DC has apparently passed up the option to continue the quarterly series in collaboration, so Marvel must continue alone, and begin numbering again due to legal technicalities. As a result, **Oz** books 2 and 3 will be numbered 1 and 2, in addition to the Marvel-DC **Oz** 1.

In any case, the second Oz book (numbered 1) will contain an adaptation of L. Frank Baum's **Land of Oz**, starring the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodsman. A transvestite-like hero is the title character in the next book adaptation, **Ozma of Oz**, with a short pause in production following, pending sales returns on the first two (first) issues. Roy Thomas has plans to continue the series with **Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz**, but will meet his over 100 page per month writing committment with new books and established series until he gets the go ahead.

Alfredo Alcala is illustrating all the Oz books for the time being, because, according to Roy, "he captures the flavor and style of both the Oz material and the 1890's period in which the tales take place. He's simply perfect for the book. He also captures the appearances of the MGM characters a bit better than the first book did, so that at least our investment in film royalties is being covered."

Production on the massive **Superman vs Spider-Man** project is nearing completion, with the subject of release dates now being considered. To be in time for the Christmas season, the book must go on sale

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by November, but the schedule for such a move is almost prohibitively tight at this time. Sales during the winter months are also a major factor, since they are traditionally low. Stan, Carmine and their accountants and advisors are debating whether or not to rely on the drawing power of the two superstars with a January release, or to wait for the already proven sales increase that summer brings.

As an interesting insight into the relations between Marvel and National on this project, plans were fully underway to produce the book with a different cover for each company. The problem of whose name was to come first on the cover was at the root of the matter, plus each company's policy to appear to be in charge. Unfortunately, both Marvel and DC's individuality was crushed on September 23, when their lawyers informed them that they could print each cover in different colors, but

COMIXSCENE

they cannot tamper with the essential elements upon the basic cover. Final resolution: the title will read Superman first and Spider-Man second on all books.

Gerry Conway, Ross Andru and Dick Giordano are the writer, artist and inker for this extra-large, $2.00 project, but just who gets the original artwork is an interesting question, in light of the book's historic importance. Under the Marvel system, Andru would receive 75-80% of the pages, Giordano 15-20% and Conway 5-10%. National's policy has generally been to put the art into a bonded warehouse, where it is lost, forgotten, destroyed, stolen, or maybe someday returned. Andru, as a Marvel artist, should

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get his work back, Conway as a National writer probably won't get any, and Giordano can act as referee as a more or less neutral contributor. What eventually happens should prove interesting. Also, virtually no mention has been made of the fact that both Marvel and National are investing extra-big money into extra-big books with (in this case at least) almost assuredly proportionately extra-big profits, while paying the same old small comic book wages.

Despite the bullpen blurb to the contrary, **The Savage Sword of**

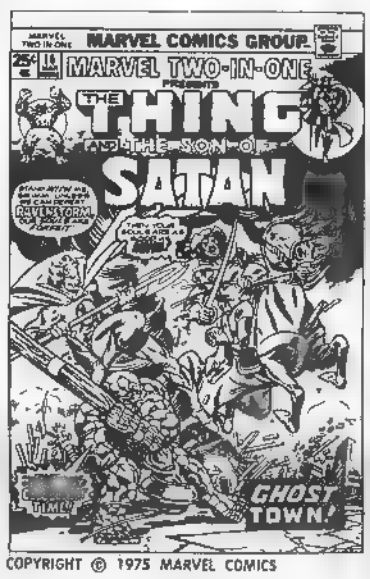
savage sword sched sheathed

Conan b&w magazine is not on a monthly schedule yet. A general cutback in the line has negated those plans for a while, giving Roy a chance to write something other than Howard-inspired sword and sorcery.

In any case, for issue 10 of **Savage Sword**, Roy promises to wind-up the sprawling saga of Conan the Conqueror in a final 50-page installment. John Buscema and the tribe will handle the art in place of Gil Kane, who is currently committed to his own hardcover book projects for Morning Star Press.

Savage Sword 11 will feature another 50-page comic novel, this time converting Robert E. Howard's "Country of the Knife" featuring Francis X. Gordon, into an Arabian Knights-type tale starring Conan titled "Abode of the Damned."

In the regular **Conan** color comic, Steve Gan will take over as the inker for John Buscema's pencils, while Conan begins his "Queen of the Black Coast" saga in earnest. Immediately after presenting the origin of Belit, the lady pirate, Roy will embark upon a tale that explains how the Cimmerian acquired the nickname of Amra, the Lion. In all, Thomas plans to spend the next year or so on the corsair phase of the barbarian's career, and promises a few surprises along the way, especially since John Buscema has expressed an interest in



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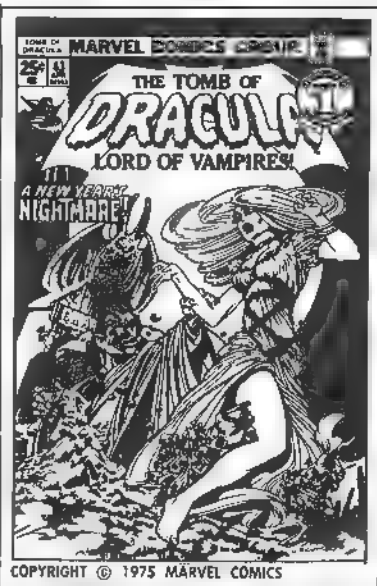
plotting a few of the stories he is drawing.

The dethroned **Kull, the Destroyer** returns in his color comic guise, continuing the original numbering as though nothing had ever happened. This is a result of the character's magazine incarnation, which sold fairly well, but was axed when panic gripped the b&w's as a result of last winter's sales slump. In fact, the only sales figures available even now, are in many ways incomplete and inconclusive. Roy and Ed Hannigan are handling Kull's return with Thulsa Doom turning up again and again and again, by virtue of his villainy and his popularity.

Roy will also be resuming the full-time scripting chores for **Red Sonja**, virtually monopolizing Marvel's Howard adaptations.

In the superhero field, Thomas is planning to coordinate an adventure between the **Fantastic Four** and **Marvel Two-in-One** as he takes over editorial control and Ben Grimm loses his Thing alter-ego for two or three months. To handle this disconcerting turn of events, Grimm has an artificial Thing constructed, and battles the Hulk one more time.

There are plans underway at Marvel for a reinstatement of the all-original 50-cent comic format, now that sales figures for last year's books are available. It seems as though the initial foray into the 50-cent line was concentrated on the horror field, just as the bottom fell out of the market. As time passed, the horror figures pulled



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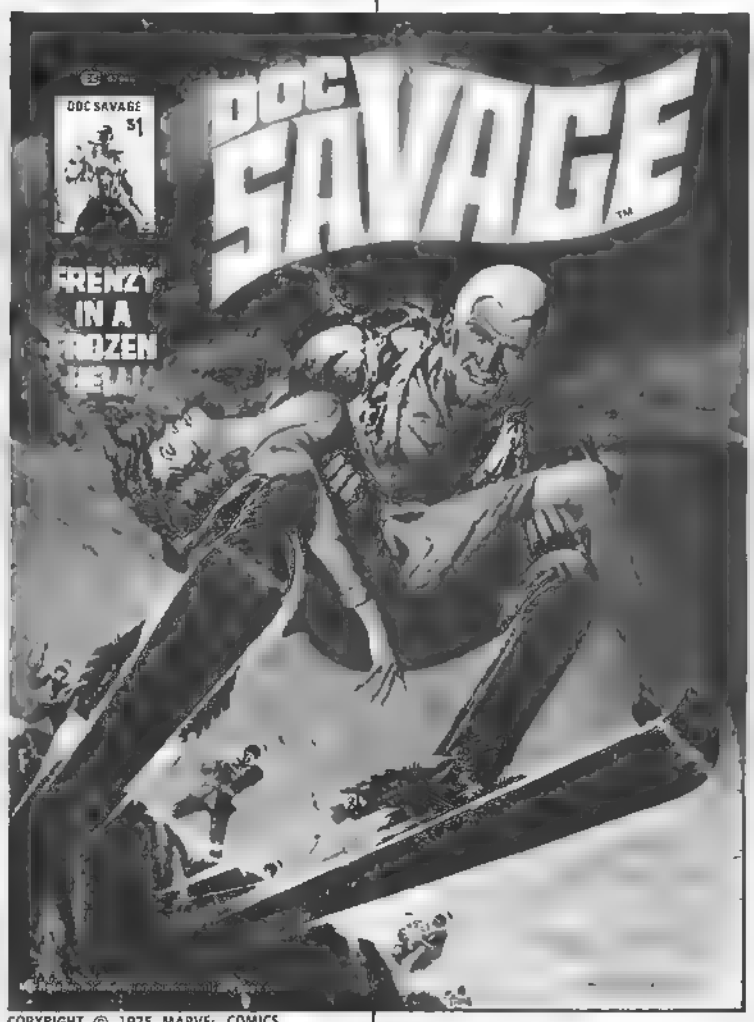

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down other averages, while paper and economic problems caused a premature abortion of the giant-sized comics project. Now that the true picture is available, plans are being drawn to establish **Conan, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four** and **Avengers** giants, with the attraction focusing on all-original art. As a piece of nostalgic sales incentive, Kirby may be called upon to illustrate an **FF Giant**, with Roy Thomas writing, providing certain contractual difficulties can be ironed out between them.

Even more nostalgic is Thomas' revival of the 40's superheroes in **The Invaders**, now to be joined by The Liberty Legion in a four-part story that is equally divided between **Invaders** 5 and 6, and **Marvel Premier** 29 and 30. The Liberty Legion consists of The Fin, Red Raven, Whizzer, Thin Man, Blue Diamond, Miss America, The Patriot and Jack Frost, all called together by Bucky. Rich Buckler and Dick Ayers are the fortunate artists who get to tackle all dozen and a half heroes and their foes. Don Heck and Vinnie Colletta are really the lucky ones though, they get to scramble and unscramble all those red, yellow and blue costumes when the two superhero groups lock in battle royale.

In the area of new projects, Thomas is working on several new ideas, including an adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's **Jungle Book**. This project is inspired by the feature film starring Sabu, not the cartoon from Disney, and will start off with the origin of Mowgli and his hate for Shere Khan, the Bengal Tiger that killed his father.

Next, Roy and Buscema team-up to bring back **The Black Knight**, in the days of King Arthur. Buscema's enthusiasm for the series is at a remarkable high, and besides pencilling and inking the strip, he will also be involved in developing the essential plot lines as often as possible, allowing Roy to spend his time more economically in dialoguing the completed pages.

Previously announced, but not-yet-printed projects are also due to appear soon, including an adaptation of Philip Wylie's **Gladiator**, drawn by Rich Buckler, and another chapter of the **Man-Gods from Outer Space**, illustrated by Alex Nino. Both stories may turn up as one-shot color comic if the black and white magazines continue to decline.

As virtually the sole survivors of the monster/horror genre, **Dracula** and **Werewolf by Night** are treading

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cautiously along the back alleys of comicdom. With the threat of cancellation always imminent, they are being studied for methods of improvement, and will both be moving steadily toward firming up connections with the established Marvel Universe. This becomes particularly evident in **Dracula**, as Marv Wolfman brings the Prince of Darkness back to life, plunges him into two Night Stalker-type tales, then introduces Doctor Strange into the storyline. Using the Master of the Mystic Arts as an excuse to kick-off another one of his massive comic-novels, Wolfman promptly kills both Strange and his servant Wong, only to resurrect him later in the Doctor's own book, leaving the Count free to pursue his epic destiny. Berni Wrightson gives **Dracula** a suitably macabre cover to commemorate the event.

Things are only slightly less hectic in **Daredevil**, as Wolfman takes over to create havoc in the form of a new villain with an old name, Bullseye. He also reveals how, sometime in the past 20 years, the CIA assassinated a US president and replaced him with a stooge, plus the explanation as to how John and Robert F. Kennedy are alive, and the Viet Nam war was a hoax that never really occurred. Extra-plus: Uri Gellar guest stars!!

Keeping the same pace, Marv is also working with John Buscema on a science-fiction inspired superhero known as Black Nova, in addition to another superhero who is a genuine cloven-hooved satyr, known

as Wood-God.

A number of older heroes are getting their big chance at one-shot titles next spring, in the hopes that they are strong enough to survive on the comic battlefield. **Nighthawk, Valkyrie, The Vision, Scarlet Witch, Angel, Iceman, The Scarecrow** and **Doc Samson** are already scheduled, as well as a Jim Starlin/Howie Chaykin collaboration on the return of **Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD.**

Moving from the sublime to the ridiculous, **Howard the Duck** makes his debut in October with a barbaric storyline, guest-starring Spider-Man. Issue 2 will feature the Deadly Space Turnip, and number 3 will contain The Master of Quack Fu.

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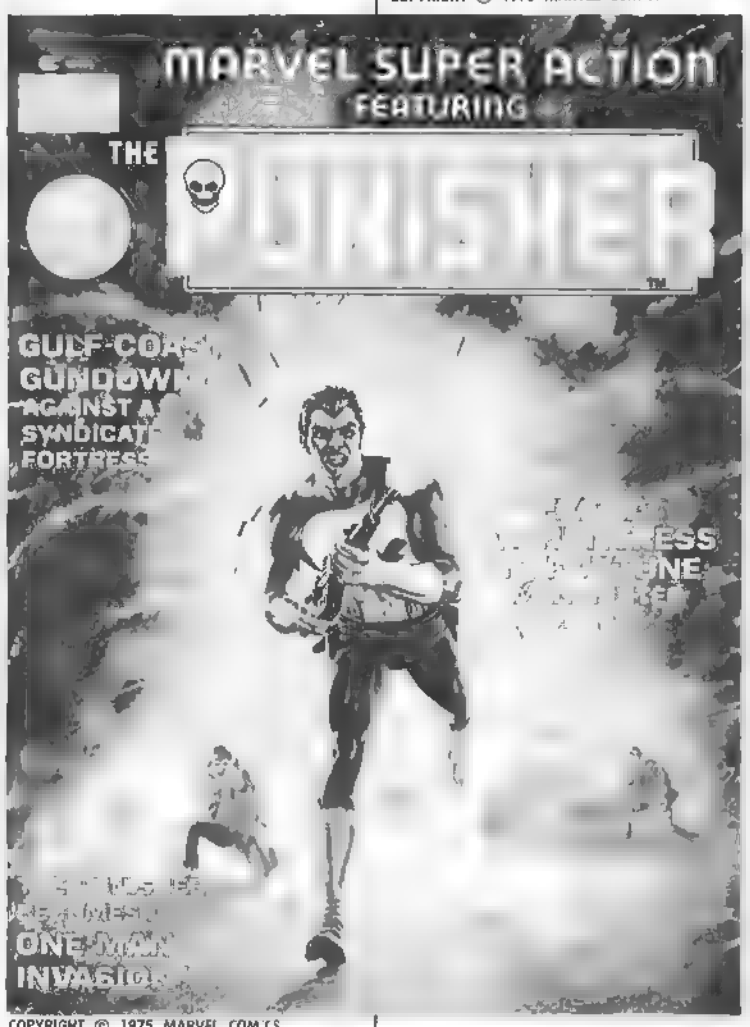
Howard is not alone in his comical crime-fighting crusade however, since Marvel is soon to unveil the true-to-life adventures of San Diego's resident costumed crime-fighter, **Captain Sticky.** Bob (Moose) Foster is developing Captain Sticky into a color comic project, now that his **Crazy** series has reached its conclusion in issue 17. Just what direction **Sticky** will take (other than humorous) is still unknown, but Foster is reportedly interviewing the Captain (yes, he's for real), and will begin submitting ideas soon.

Herb Trimpe has decided that he has had enough of his green-skinned goliath for a while, and has turned **The Hulk** over to Sal Buscema so that he can switch over to **Iron Man** and **Super-Villain Team-Up.** The most striking result of this artistic turnover will be the eradication of the triangular nose of Iron Man's red and yellow metallic visage.

To go along with his new no-nose look, IM will be running into a number of new foes, and some old enemies in new outfits. The Freak and The Living Arsenal are just two of the newer characters, and both the Crimson Dynamo and the Mandarin reappear in refurbished forms. Len Wein will be scripting the stories, and among his first adventures, Iron Man will re-design his costume so that getting in and out of it will be less of a hassle.

Len is also building **The Hulk** up to his imminent 200th anniversary issue with a pair of double-sized bouts, first against The Abomination, and then the Man-Thing. Jim Starlin will draw one of the Man-Thing issues, which has a Berni Wrightson cover, leading into issue 199's encounter with SHIELD without Nick Fury. For the 200th issue, the main feature will be the resolution of Glenn Talbot's vegetable problem, the first development of a Hulk the Barbarian storyline, and the return of Jirella.

Moving on to **Spider-Man,** Len and Sal Buscema will be bringing back the Sandman, Dr. Octopus, the Punisher, Tigra and the Spidey-mobile, as well as a whodunit story that crosses over into **Daredevil** without the horned-hero ever appearing in the actual story.



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Finally, the long-awaited marriage of Betty Brant and Ned Leeds takes place in the finest Marvel manner.

Asgardian adventure is also on Wein's agenda as **Thor** becomes embroiled in a four-part adventure with the Time Twisters, followed by a two-part Firelord sequence that vaguely ties into the Bicentennial with its theme of revolution in Asgard. As an offshoot of the Thor series, and crossing over with the January issue of the Thunder-god's title, **Warriors Three** will chronicle the adventures of Hogun, Fandral and Volstagg when they take off for a night on the town. Len and John Buscema will produce this one-shot mini-epic that takes a humorous look at a trio of Asgardians who face Ragnarok without fear, but are somewhat at a loss when it comes to the painted ladies of New York City.

The majority of Marvel's new ideas are being channelled through

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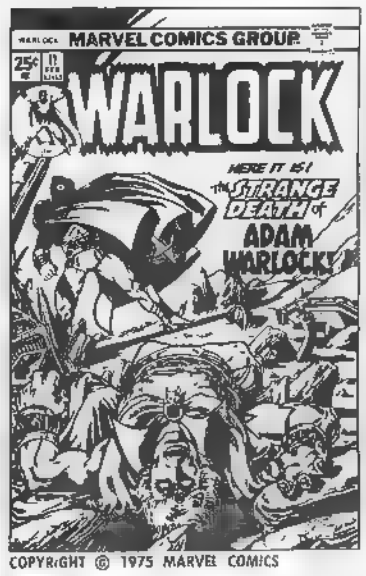
for future publication are; **Moonight,** the superhero who debuted in **Werewolf by Night;** a sci-fi superhero strip being developed by Howie Chaykin; and Weird World, a Tolkeinesque fantasy series written by Doug Moench and drawn by Mike Ploog, starring an elfin, Hobitt-like character known as Tyndall of Klarn.

Don McGregor will be starting up another serialized novel in comic form, starring the Black Panther, in **Jungle Action** 19, as the Wakanda Prince travels to the US and takes on the Grand Dragon of the KKK. Titled "Blood and Sacrifices," the story has T'Challa investigating the murder/suicide of Monica's sister. Billy Graham and Bob McCloud



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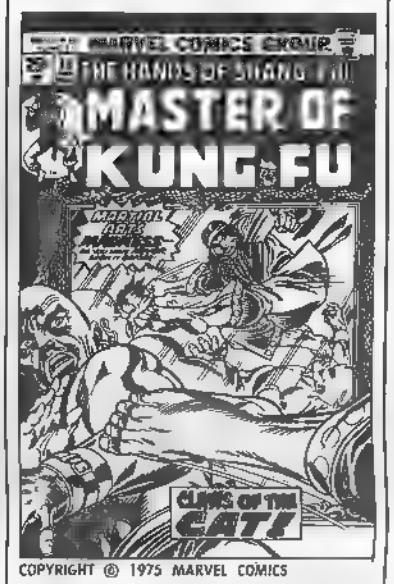
illustrate this series of tales, all of which join to form a genuine murder mystery, complete with clues.

Jungle Action 20, which has the Panther tied to a cross and set on fire for a climax, introduces Monica's parents soon after the African chief runs into trouble trying to buy some frozen food at the supermarket. **JA** 21 continues the tale of the Panther's infiltration of the Klan, and features a spectacular double-page spread. Future stories will concentrate on the Panther's adventures in the Reconstruction Era immediately after the Civil War, but Don won't tell how the 100-year time jump takes place.

Killraven 34 winds up its long series of tales concerning Skar in the story "A Death in the Family." Craig Russell took four months to draw the 17-page tale, which kills off two of the Freemen, reveals the origin of Grok, and develops the relationship between Camilla and M'Shulla.

Issue 35 contains one of Don's darkest and most perverse stories, titled "The 24-Hour Man," and is about a Georgia native who is the last of his race, and must mate before his life runs out at the end of 24 hours. The bizarre story is full of symbolic images and allegories, and must surely stand as one of the most unusual Marvel tales ever.

Killraven 36 takes place in the Okeefenokee Swamp, and not only introduces a new character (Mourning Prey, the caterpiller woman),



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but also explains why the Martians are so all-fired determined to destroy Killraven and his Freemen. And if anyone out there reads **Killraven,** McGregor is mounting a letter-writing campaign, because this is one title on the endangered species list.

A recent addition to the McGregor work quota is the now monthly adventures of **Luke Cage, Hero for Hire.** With issue 30, a toothsome villain named Pirahna Jones is introduced, and becomes a menace because he can chew his way through Cage's hide. The story also contains a thoroughly disgusting cockroach scene that serves as character development to one of Cage's old arch-enemies.

"Over the Years they Murdered the Stars" is the title of the story in **Luke Cage** 31, and it concludes the Pirahna/cockroach trilogy of tales. New dangers arise at the end however, as Noah Burstein runs into trouble from his past, and Cage **almost** saves Manhattan from lung cancer.

Marvel's expansion into the black and white magazine market is going to continue to be severly restricted in the coming months, as the showcase title, **Marvel Preview,** maintains its quarterly schedule, and new proposals are subjected

power-packed premier pair

to the closest scrutiny in light of last year's failures. In **Preview,** two issues of The Starlords will be followed by two installments of Doug Moench and Val Mayerik's Sherlock Holmes. Future plans include everything from more horror to new superheroic concepts, and a bi-monthly schedule is being contemplated to present more ideas on an accelerated timetable.

And finally, even though his **Son of the Origins of Marvel Comics** has only been on sale a matter of weeks, Stan is already preparing to compile the third volume of his series. This time however, the Marvel villains are in the spotlight, and the focus will be on their most

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the **Spotlight** and **Premier** titles, with so many projects in the works that the books are scheduled for well over the next six months. Currently being written and drawn

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dastardly deeds, their first appearances, and their never-ending supply of ulterior motives.

At National, serious shake-ups, cancellations and restructurings are taking place daily. Paul Levitz, Allen Asherman and two production people have been laid-off; almost every book has been cut back or cancelled; and Joe Kubert has relinquished nearly all his editorial duties.

For Kubert, the lessening of non-drawing committments is being compensated for by new ideas and more time at the board. Joe Orlando is taking over as editor of both **Tarzan** and **Korak**, which have always been plagued by high royalty costs (reportedly as much as $1000 per issue) by ERB Inc. Kubert

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will undoubtedly continue creating the covers for **Tarzan**, much as he does for **Sgt. Rock**, and fans need not worry about imminent cancellation in the Ape-man's future because, according to a high National source, "**Tarzan** is too important a property to let die. We'll probably run it at a loss if we have to," putting it in the same category with **Wonder Woman, Shazam!** and a few other embarassingly important but reportedly financially bankrupt characters.

Before he turns over the editorial reins, Kubert has at least three more **Tarzan** tales in the can, two of which are adaptations of Burroughs' last novelettes, "Tarzan and the Champion" and "Tarzan and the Jungle Murders." Joe's last contribution to the ape-man chronicles will be an original tale entitled "The Diamond Slave."

Also resulting from Kubert's shifting of power will be the introduction of Philippino art over Joe's layouts in the traditionally important **Sgt Rock**. And the new project, **Blitzkrieg**, edited by Joe, written by Kanigher, drawn by Ric Estrada, will suspend publication after three issues to begin the long agonizing wait for sales figures.

The majority of Kubert's comic committments in the future will be devoted to the completion of the Old Testament of the **Bible**, in collaboration with Nestor Redondo. This project will ultimately encompass 8 to 10 volumes, and take 3 to 5 years to produce, depending on sales, page counts and enthusiasm. As it is, DC's $1.00 size format may soon be cutting pages in order to maintain equality with economic reality.

Joe is also helping to develop a number of other new projects, created in the more offbeat 40's tradition by top comic writer Bob Kanigher. Acknowledged by Kubert as "one of the most talented guys I know," Kanigher's track record contains innumerable successes throughout the 50's and 60's, and includes the creation of such diverse characters as **Sgt. Rock, Enemy Ace, Viking Prince, The Sea Devils, The Haunted Tank** and **The Losers** (both now and when they were originally winners). Terse, imaginative and infused with epic

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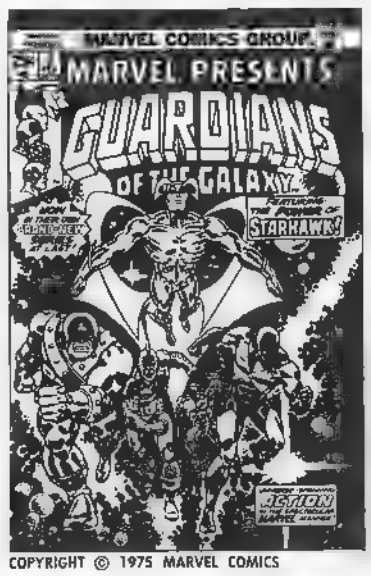
honor and mythic majesty, Kanigher's writing has almost always been dynamic and forceful, while performing the difficult function of selling comics. Perhaps the most important thing to his credit though, is the fact that many of today's young comic writers readily admit that Kanigher was a great influence on their formative careers, and has maybe been unjustly overlooked due to the flamboyant enormity of the Marvel Age.

For the summer of '76, Kanigher is continuing his career as an energetic creator and storyteller with a trio of new ideas that include a women's lib version of the Blackhawks, a cops and robbers strip with a twist, and an offbeat superhero idea called **The Junkman.**

Sometimes referred to as the "Tatterdamelion," **The Junkman** is an ex-GI from Vietnam named Rory Regan, who assumes a Spirit-like existence soon after his trash



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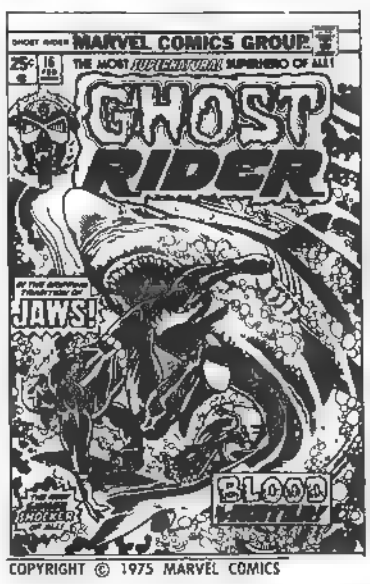

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man father finds a mattress stuffed with a million dollars. When gangsters come to reclaim the fortune, Regan joins his father, a strongman, a boxer and an acrobat in the ensuing battle. A high voltage murder attempt succeeds in killing all but Rory. Rising from the carnage, he discovers he now has extra powers of speed, strength and agility, and elects to take up the crusade against crime with the comicly descriptive **nom de guerre**, The Junkman.

National has a number of other new book proposals in their files, but expansion will have to wait until the latest crop of titles prove themselves on the newsstand. Even now, the new books, including **Man-Bat, Green Lantern-Green Arrow, Stalker, All-Star, Plastic Man, Karate Kid, Metal Men**, all of Gerry Conway's entries, **Blackhawks, Hercules**, and virtually most other releases this year, are being limited

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to three or six-issue trial runs. Since the first couple issues of any book usually sell poorly, most will probably never see print again.

Another list of books is reportedly being prepared for cancellation, including **Tor, Beowulf, Kong, Richard Dragon, The Avenger, First Issue Special** and **Warlord**. Captain Marvel's **Shazam!** has also proved to be a bomb of the 70's and survives as a quarterly reprint for merchandising sake. All the "Family" books created around Superman, Batman and Tarzan, as well as the new **DC Special** and **Four Star Spectacular**, are all reprint. And as of this writing, 8 to 10 war and mystery titles are in line for cancellation, while **House of Secrets** goes bi-monthly and pushes its backlog into the 1980's.

On the brighter side, **King Arthur, The New Testament** and the **DC Society of Super Villains** are to arrive soon, and comicologist Jerry Bails, has joined DC's staff in an editorial capacity. Among his first projects, Jerry will be adding a touch of perspective to DC's revival of **All-Star Comics**, as well as printing a letter of complaint about a subscription by Roy Thomas.

The DC Super-Calendar by Neal Adams has finally made it to the printers, and should go on sale before the year is out. The same can also be said for the hardcover **Secret Origins of the Super Heroes**, also sporting an Adams cover.

And in one of their wisest moves in recent history, National declined to purchase the comic book rights to the live Saturday morning show **Isis**, leaving Marvel wide open for the sale. By the way, there's a new actor playing Captain Marvel on the **Shazam!** TV show, but it seems to take a five year-old mind to be able to watch long enough to tell.

Gold Key comics will be getting a new editorial director soon in the person of Bill Spicer, as Craig Chase takes his retirement after many years of service. Presumably, Spicer will be handling all the West Coast adventure titles, after having lettered many Gold Key comics for the last few years.

Meanwhile, Dan Glut is expanding Gold Key's adventure line almost single-handedly; his latest efforts

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resulting in **Tragg** 4's, "Project: Sabre Fang." This development has the Sky-Gods creating a human/sabre tooth monster out of one of the cavemen, with the ultimate result being a confrontation with Tragg over the tar pits.

In the other caveman/sword and sorcery series, **Dagar**, our hero fights ghouls, zombies and hobgoblins while attempting to recover a valuable scepter from a living mummy.

In a more contemporary vein, **Dr. Spektor** 19 contains "Loch of the Leviathan," the story of an octopus-like horror living for centuries in a Scottish lake. Tragg makes an appearance in a flashback sequence, and a mysterious Laird Ravenscroft is at the crux of the affair. **Spektor** 20 will return the mummy Ra-Ka-Tep to life, so that he, Spektor and Lakota can literally go through the events depicted in the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

On the East Coast, Gold Key is reportedly preparing a science-fiction adventure book that will feature adaptations of classics of the genre. Preliminary plans call for a format larger than the standard 25-cent size, to be titled **Omega**, but since Marvel also has plans for that name, GK's will probably be changed.

Next issue, **MEDIASCENE** will present more on Kirby's new Marvel projects, Charlton's quest for movie successes, and a unique event which is destined to change the course of comic history.●

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Hard Times

Hard Times

Hard Times

Take A Hard Ride

Take A Hard Ride

It's chow time in the animal kingdom for the next few months, thanks to the $100 million success of Universal's super-shark saga, **Jaws**. Gathering for the boxoffice banquet is a seething menagerie of carnivorous creatures whose ferocity is perhaps second only to their promoters'. At the head of the line putting the bite on 1976 is that most horrible monsters—the sequel, **Jaws II**.

Mako—The Jaws of Death is another shark thriller currently filming, as is **Crimson Blood**, the story of a psychotic who trains sharks to attack and kill his enemies.

Other foul fish soon to surface include **Dolphin Island**, based on the Arthur C. Clarke novel. Then there's **Piranha**, the chronicle of a crazed California aquarium owner who spreads terror in Beverly Hills by stocking swimming pools with the tiny toothy tuna.

films face fishy future

Returning from TV and movie limbo to take part in the kill are two forgotten features, the documentary **Blue Water, White Death**, and Cornell Wilde's **Shark's Treasure**. Finally there's the return of the Burt Reynold's film **Shark**, in which an unfortunate cameraman is attacked and eaten, live, on the big screen. (Who says you don't get more for your money nowadays?)

The modern **Moby Dick** metaphor of **Jaws** is also finding a home on dry land with the furry fury of a rampaging bear in Yellowstone Park, going under the coyly classic title **Claws**. And Irwin Allen has the Battle of the Bumblebee mapped out for his **Swarm**.

Killer crocodiles are scheduled to run amok among the Australians in a down under development called **Farewell Moses**, while United Artists has a property known as **Alligator** on its schedule. Unfortunately, UA found out, after expensive preparatory work, that alligators are lethargic and lazy and almost never attack humans.

All in all, the jumble of **Jaws** spinoffs is reminiscent of the mania generated by Alfred Hitchcock's **The Birds**, which begat **Ben, Willard, Frogs, The Killer Bees**, etc. . . Following the extremes of this, and the 74-75 disaster trends as an example, 1976 may literally be the year America goes to the dogs!

Meanwhile, **Jaws'** director Steven Spielberg is extending his creative talents to include original screenwriting for his next film project, **A Close Encounter of the Third Kind**. Spielberg will also direct **Close Encounter**, which will probably disqualify him from working on **Jaws II**.

Charles Bronson pummels his way across the screen this fall as a bare-knuckles professional fighter in Columbia's **Hard Times**. James Coburn and Jill Ireland co-star in

The Dragon Flies

The Dragon Flies

Rocky Horror Show

Rocky Horror Show

Rocky Horror Show

the typically tough, 1930's tale of back-room brawling and bloody action. Bronson returns again in the violent western murder mystery **Breakheart Pass**. Based on the best-selling novel by Alistair (**Guns of Navarone**) MacLean, **Pass** takes place on a westward-bound troop train where deaths occur with alarming frequency. Also starring in the production are Jill Ireland, Ben Johnson and Richard Crenna, with direction by Tom (**Breakout**) Gries.

For Christmas, George Segal will be starring in the 35-years-later sequel to the classic **Maltese Falcon**, titled **The Blackbird . . . or the Maltese Falcon Flies Again**. Also being prepared is Richard (**3 and 4 Musketeers**) Lester's version of the **Ballad of Robin and Marion**, starring Sean Connery as an aging Robin Hood, Audrey Hepburn as Maid Marian, and Robert Shaw as the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, aided and abetted by Richard Harris along the way.

Futuristic fantasy is slated for Columbia release by way of Stirling (**Towering Inferno**) Silliphant's production of **Hiero's Journey**, from a screenplay by the producer. Douglas Trumbull has been signed to direct **Journey** on the strength of his special fx achievements in **2001: A Space Odyssey, The Andromeda Strain**, and his producing/writing/directing job on **Silent Running**.

Turn of the century comedy is another field being explored next year, with the James Caan, Michael Caine, Elliott Gould, Diane Keaton safe-cracking caper, **Harry and Walter Go to New York**. Mark (**The Cowboys**) Rydell is directing this story of two struggling vaudevillians whose aspirations carry them into a more lucrative vocational line.

Author Truman Capote makes his acting debut next year in Neil Simon's original comedy screenplay, **Murder by Death**, co-starring Eileen Brennan. This time, laughs are focused on four famous detectives who gather as weekend guests in a New England country manor, trying to solve a murder yet to be committed.

jolson sings holmes sleuths

Voices and images from the past may be haunting the theaters again soon as the major film companies watch and wait for the ultimate results of Columbia's reissue of 1946's **The Jolson Story**, starring Larry Parks and the voice of Al Jolson. A similar reissue of 1939's Sherlock Holmes film, **The Hound of the Baskervilles**, has met with some success already, and an entire barrage of black and white classics could be forthcoming.

20th Century-Fox has a diversified fall schedule planned, beginning with their current release, **Take A Hard Ride**. Jim Brown, Fred

Rocky Horror Show

Rocky Horror Show

Dog Day Afternoon

Dog Day Afternoon

Rooster Cogburn

FALL FILM FARE

Williamson, Jim Kelly and Lee Van Cleef star in what is essentially a gold inspired chase across the Southwest, with a typically violent finish.

Former James Bond, George Lazenby, returns to the screen in one of the current crop of karate capers titled **The Dragon Flies**. Lazenby portrays an Australian gangster, whom the hero, Jimmy Wang Yu must overcome to dragon-stomp out a dope ring. Plenty of chop-socky action for dedicated fans of the genre.

This month, **Royal Flash** premiers in New York, introducing the film world to the gallant rogue, Harry Flashman, in the person of Malcolm McDowell. Britt Eckland and Oliver Reed also star in the George McDonald Fraser screenplay, based on his own novel, with direction by Richard Lester.

glitter rocker screen shocker

In time for Halloween, the glittering musical **Rocky Horror Show** makes a sensational debut with a hard rock score, a chorus line of bizarre Transylvanians, and a hero who is a transvestite mad doctor. Based on the supersuccessful stageplay, the film stars Tim Curry, Susan Sarandon, composer/author Richard O'Brien, Meatloaf, Little Nell, and Peter Hinwood as the sex-monster.

In 20th's future, Gene Wilder dons the writer/actor/director's hat to produce **Sherlock Holmes Smarter Brother**. Madeline Kahn and Marty Feldman also star in this irreverant, irrational spoof of the Conan Doyle legend.

Ralph Bakshi's animated epic, **The War Wizards**, comes next, followed by **Mother, Jugs and Speed**, starring (in no particular order) Raquel Welch and Bill Cosby, directed by Peter (**Bullitt**) Yates.

As the first major film production made with the cooperation of Soviet Russia, George Cukor's **The Bluebird** is finally winding up filming after a troubled-ridden shooting schedule. Elizabeth Taylor, Jane Fonda, Cicely Tyson, Will Geer, Ava Gardner and James Coco star, making the massive film one of the more important projects for 1976.

Finally, Linda Lovelace has bowed out of the filming of the pornopic **Laura**, being shot from a screenplay by **Emmanuelle**'s author Emmanuelle Arsan. Reasons for the departure revolve around Miss Lovelace finding the acting chores too hard to handle.

Warner Bros. production of **All the President's Men** is winding up production in Los Angeles, and going into the editing phase for a winter-spring release. Robert Redford, Dustin Hoffman, Jason Robards, Jack Warden and Martin Balsam head the all-star cast dramatizing (on a multi-million dollar budget) the buildup to, and exposure of, the Watergate break-in, all realistically directed by Alan (**Klute**) Pakula.

Rooster Cogburn

Rooster Cogburn

The Hindenburg

Sidecar Racers

Undercovers Hero

Linda Blair will go to the devil again for the cameras in January '76 with the commencement of production of **The Exorcist, Part II.** Regan will now be a 17-year old high school senior when the horror strikes, this time under the direction of Sam O'Steen, instead of the William Blatty/William Friedkin team that made the original a really frightening experience.

Currently making the rounds, Al Pacino trades his **Godfather** role for that of a gay bandit in Warner's **Dog Day Afternoon**. Sidney Lumet, Dino De Laurentiis and Pacino, all **Serpico** veterans, team-up again to tell the story of a bank robber who plans to use his ill-gotten gains to finance a sex-change operation.

Stanley Kubrick will be packing theaters again this Christmas when he presents his epic adventure swashbuckler, **The Luck of Barry Lyndon**. Ryan O'Neal stars as Lyndon, full of derring-do and 17th century grandeur.

Mike (**The Graduate**) Nichols has begun filming the Robert DeNiro-Marsha Mason starrer, **Bogart Slept Here**. DeNiro plays a struggling New York actor whose life changes when he is "discovered" by director Roman Polanski (in a cameo appearance). **Bogart** is the first in a number of original screenplays being produced by Neil Simon for Ray Stark Productions. Film critic Richard Schickel is also breaking into the film field with Stark, starting out with the TV documentary/special on **The Great Ladies**, and then moving up with an offbeat cycle-saga, **A Man is Missing.**

Ex-Beverly Hillbilly Max (Jethro) Baer has moved to Warner Bros. for the production of his third feature film, **Ode to Billy Joe**. Baer himself will produce and direct on location at the Tallahatchee Bridge in Mississippi, with Bobby Gentry wailing out the ballad in the background.

Film king Irwin Allen has apparently decided to make his home at Warner for a while, with the closing of the biggest producer/director deal in movie history. Three pictures are to be made according to the agreement, with possible choices including **The Walter Syndrom, The Swarm, The Poseidon Adventure Part II, The Day the World Ended,** and **Circus** featuring the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Meanwhile, Stirling Silliphant, screenwriter for the original **Poseidon** and **Towering Inferno**, has closed his own three picture/million dollar contract. Part of the commitment calls for the creation of a new Clint Eastwood/Dirty Harry vehicle, adapting the novel **Jerusalem's Lot** into a shooting script titled **Salem's Lot**, and one more as yet unspecified film.

Charles Bronson has also signed a million dollar deal with Warner to star in the upcoming **The Last Score**, based on the Oliver Bleek novel, **The Procane Chronicle. Tam-**

The Sunshine Boys

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

The Killer Elite

The Killer Elite

Three Days of the Condor

pico is also set to go before the cameras in the spring, while casting agents look for an American Soldier of Fortune-type to use a 1909 biplane to aid Mexican insurgents in a race to corner the South of the border oil market.

Universal Pictures' runaway success with **Jaws** has effectively eclipsed their other film productions, but in the months ahead, new blockbuster films are being prepared to take up the slack when the big fish tires.

John Wayne and Katherine Hepburn are the big guns for the Fall-Winter film season in the **True Grit** sequel, **Rooster Cogburn.** This time, Rooster tracks down an outlaw gang in order to regain his confiscated badge and $2000. An entertaining look at the aging, nostalgic west, **Cogburn** is sagebrush storytelling, with a liberal dose of the **African Queen** thrown in for good measure.

The world's greatest dirigible rises like a phoenix from its own charred ashes to relive its destruction in Robert (**Andromeda Strain**) Wise's latest production, **The Hindenburg.** Turned into a complex tale of sabotage and international intrigue, **The Hindenburg** stars Anne Bancroft, and George C. Scott in what he declares will be "my last acting performance unless I go broke as a director."

The sport of motorcycle sidecar racing, from Australia, becomes fall film fare in Universal's free-wheeling production, **Sidecar Racers.** Ben Murphy, Peter Graves and real sidecar racers star in a story of dangerous dirtbike racing in which the competitors circle a rough track at 100 miles per hour with no brakes. Apparently **Rollerball** wasn't as fanciful as most people thought.

Coming up from Universal for early '76 will be Alfred Hitchcock's murder mystery/spy thriller, **The Family Plot.** Bruce Dern and Karen Black star in the convoluted tale, screen-written by Ernest (**North by Northwest, Sound of Music**) Lehman.

holmes finds new solution

The bestselling **Seven Percent Solution** will appear on film next, dealing in depth with the hitherto secretive life of Sherlock Holmes, directed by Herbert (**Last of Sheila**) Ross. Robert Duvall, Joel Gray and an all-star cast are featured, along with a title song by Steven Sondheim.

Jack (**Airport 75**) Smight turns up next with the devastating chronicle of the greatest naval battle in history, **Midway.** Charlton Heston, Henry Fonda and James Coburn co-star with Sensurround, the **Earthquake** gimmick that has proved so successful.

Old fashioned derring-do will be making a comeback via the 18th

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Century pirate adventure, **Swashbuckler. Jaws** sharkhunting skipper, Robert Shaw, stars in this sea-going saga of ships, swords and sneaky schemes.

Movie biographies are also making a comeback with **Lombard and Gable**, directed by Sidney (**Ipcress File**) Furie, starring James Brolin and Red Buttons, and **W.C. Fields and Me**, starring Rod Steiger (as Fields), Valerie Perrine and Jack Cassidy.

United Artists' current plans are spearheaded by a Peter Sellers war/spy spoof, calculated to follow-up their **Return of the Pink Panther** success. Titled **Undercovers Hero**, the film is a tour de force for Sellers, as he plays six distinctly different disguise parts, ranging from a fanatical WW II Japanese general to Adolf Hitler.

George Burns and Walter Matthau star next in Herb Ross' production of Neil Simon's **The Sunshine Boys**. Jack Nicholson is slated to star in the visualization of the bestselling novel **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**. Finally, Dan (**Night Stalker**) Curtis presents **Burnt Offering**, starring Oliver Reed, Karen Black, Bette Davis and Burgess Meredith.

For Christmas, Sam (**Wild Bunch**) Peckinpah will be offering a tough technological kill-caper starring James Caan and Robert Duvall, **The Killer Elite**. In this one, Peckinpah takes a long, bloody swipe at a CIA-like organization, while exploring his usual theme of one honorable man (spy) in a world of coldhearted realists (assassins).

In the same vein (jugular), Kris Kristofferson and Jan Michael-Vincent team up to get some down home justice in the self-explanatory **Vigilante Force**. Ho-ho-ho, and a Happy New Year . . . or else.

In the funny western department, Jeff Bridges, Andy Griffith, Alan Arkin and Donald Pleasance parody the old films of Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson and Tim McCoy in MGM's **Hearts of the West**. It's a spoof set in the 30's, about an Iowa farm boy trying to break into western films by living the parts, 50 years too late.

Arthur (**Bonnie and Clyde**) Penn plays it straight with a grand horse opera, **Missouri Breaks**. Marlon Brando stars as the man with an enormous herd of valuable horses, and Jack Nicholson is the man trying to take them from him.

From MGM, Michael (**Doc Savage**) Anderson has begun filming the '76 sci-fi epic **Logan's Run**. Michael York, Peter Ustinov, Roscoe Lee Brown and Farrah Fawcett (Mrs. **$6 Million Man**) star in the 23rd Century psychodrama, featuring a number of 3-D hologram effects never before seen in a theater.

Paramount's biggie for this fall is the Sidney (**The Way We Were**) Pollack film **Three Days of the Condor**. Robert Redford, Faye Dunaway, Cliff Robertson and John Houseman star as pawns trapped in a CIA chessgame for control of the world's oil prices.

Then, the producer/writer behind

Three Days of the Condor

Three Days of the Condor

Hennesy

Cooley High

The Wild McCullochs

the highly successful **Avengers** TV show takes on the feature film world via 19th Century necromancy in **Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter**. Writer/producer Brian Clemens makes his directing debut in this Hammer Films offering, with production assistance from long time associate Albert Fennell, and the on-screen presence of Horst Janson, Caroline Munro and Ian Hendry.

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope may be reviving their long-standing series of "Road" shows next year with the still tentative **Road to Tomorrow**. This time, the musical duo will be winging off to London when they meet after a 12-year hiatus. And yes, there's a part for Dorothy Lamour, for old time's sake.

Walter Matthau, Tatum O'Neal and Vic Morrow are the stars of Paramount's '76 comedy production **The Big Bad Bears**, directed by Michael Ritchie. Meanwhile, Bill Melendez and Charles Schulz are working on their latest animated adventure, **Race For Your Life, Charlie Brown.**

won ton ton rapped as rin tin rip-off

Something in the nature of a fictional documentary is on Paramount's list in **Won Ton Ton, the Dog Who Saved Hollywood** starring Bruce Dern, Madeline Kahn, Art Carney and Phil Silvers. **Won Ton Ton** also features cameo appearances by scores of 30's and 40's stars, and is turning into such a large project that the owner/trainer of the famous "inspirational source," Rin Tin Tin is taking offense. He claims **Won Ton Ton** is too similar to **Rin Tin Tin**, and is in some way infringing on his agreement with Warner Bros. for the TV and film appearances of his breadwinner. Ironically enough, a few months ago, **Won Ton Ton** was a Warner property titled **Won Ton Ton, the Dog Who Saved Warner Bros.** Michael (**Death Wish**) Winner has already begun to produce and direct the film, leaving the dogfighting to Para execs.

Rudyard Kipling wrote a story nearly a hundred years ago, about two roguish British officers named Danny and Peachy, who spent most of their time treasure hunting and raising hell in the Queen's province of India. Years later, writer/director John Huston discovered the tale, and made plans to film it with Humphrey Bogart. Unfortunately, too many years passed between inspiration and realization, and when the idea came up again, Clark Gable was the only actor suitable or available. Fortune frowned on him again, until he almost gave up hope of ever making the movie. Then, over 30 years after its inception, the director resurrected the project when he found two men of the 70's who could effectively portray Kipling's Danny and Peachy.

The Wild McCullochs

Crazy Ladies

The Darktown Strutters

Summer Schoolteachers

Whether the wait was worth it will be seen this Christmas as Allied Artists presents Michael Caine and Sean Connery as Danny and Peachy in John Huston's epic **The Man Who Would be King**, or, as AA is pitching it, "make yours a Danny and Peachy Christmas Season." (Boo-hiss!)

American International's film package for this fall contains the high-tension thriller, **Hennesy**. Rod Steiger stars as a revenge-driven assassin who intends to kill the Queen of England on November 5th, Guy Fawkes Day. Lee Remick, Pernell Roberts and Trevor Howard also star, directed by Don Sharp with such realism that parts of the film have been censored in England.

Meanwhile, Fred Williamson and Pam Grier turn out the standard AIP feature with the blaxploitation flick **Bucktown**. This time, Williamson sets out to clean up a corrupt small town with numerous pauses for sex and such.

Cooley High is the focal point for the serious, tragic and comic collection of experiences in growing up felt by a gang of young blacks in the appropriately titled **Cooley High**. Steve (**Fritz the Cat**) Krantz is the producer of **Cooley**, which was originally to be distributed by an established major company, but was passed to AIP because of its powerful content.

Max Baer strikes again as writer/producer/actor/director in his latest filmic statement, **The Wild McCullochs**. Set in the post war euphoria of 1949, McCullochs studies the tragic disintigration of an empire replete with fast cars, jukeboxes and the American Dream.

In the future from AIP, David Niven and Theresa Graves star in **Vampira**, while Gregory Peck and Lee Remick are featured in the multimillion dollar sci-fi flick, **The Micronauts.**

Throughout the 50's and 60's Roger Corman was the backbone of AIP's sex, slaughter, cycle and horror output, and, amongst the schlock, managed to create a striking series of cheap Edgar Allen Poe tales with style and technique. For the 70's, Corman has left AIP to form his own New World Pictures, where, as before, he offers an exploitational film outlook, with one eye on the audience and the other on the cashbox.

Among Corman's current productions is the Cloris Leachman, Stuart Whitman, Jim Backus actioner **Crazy Ladies**. Academy Award winner Leachman plays a "gutsy woman aiming to return to the roots of her Arkansas farm, and set out hell-bent and high-spirited to overtake the American Dream. . . and convention and the law be damned!"

Next, come **The Darktown Strutters**, "a knockout quartet of cycle-riding soul sisters cruisin' and bruisin' their way through town on their custom bikes." Then, **The Summer Schoolteachers** set out to defeat male chauvinism in an American high school by organizing a girl's football team, and engaging

FALL FILM FARE

in a few other sexy sports along the way. Finally, **The Cover Girl Models (The Girls With The Centerfold Spreads)** expose themselves in the violent world of spies, counterspies and the fashion industry.

Billy Jack Enterprises, the people who package moral violence are back again this fall, with Tom Laughlin and Ron O'Neal as two lonesome cowboys in **The Master Gunfighter.** The original **Billy Jack** and its sequel, **Trial of Billy Jack,** are also in re-release, and plans are already underway for BJE to expand and explore new fields.

First on the Billy Jack agenda is the Bicentennial production of **Billy Jack III,** to be followed by **The Deadliest Spy,** and then perhaps a film starring Jane Fonda. While all this progresses however, TV movies, Saturday afternoon, kiddie matinee type features and probably children's books are being planned.

Stanley **(Arabesque)** Donen returns to the movie musical genre this Christmas to present the tune-filled **Lucky Lady.** Liza Minelli, Burt Reynolds and, Gene Hackman star in **Lady,** Donen's first full-fledged musical in 15 years.

Roy Rogers is treading the comeback trail out in Lubbock, Texas with the current filming of **McKintrick and T.J.** Whether or not Rogers will sing in the movie has still to be decided, but the most important problem would appear to be finding a replacement for Trigger.

Cover Girl Models

Cover Girl Models

Cover Girl Models

Rod Serling's last complete film script is slated to go before the cameras next year with the adaptation of Morris West's **Salamander.** Sidney **(Murder on the Orient Express)** Lumet is tentatively set to direct.

Lin Carter's barbarian hero Thongor of Lemuria is apparently coming to the screen in 77-78, according to film producer Milton Subotsky. Three films are in the works, **Thongor in the Valley of Demons, Thongor in the City of Sorcerers,** and **Thar, Son of Thongor,** along with Edgar Rice Burroughs' **At the Earth's Core** as a follow-up to this year's **Land That Time Forgot.** Spider-Man and Hulk films are also on Subotsky's agenda, as well as a remake of the **Curse of the Cat People.**

John **(Wind and the Lion)** Milius has just completed the screenplay to what he terms "the most violent movie ever" in the $10 million Viet Nam War epic, **Apocalypse Now.** Francis **(Godfather I and II)** Ford Coppola is planning to direct the mammoth project in Australia early next year, and will spend most of the money on acquiring tons of Army ordanance and paying the salaries of the three leading stars. Based on Joseph Conrad's **Heart of Darkness,** the story deals with an Army captain detailed to kill a crazed fellow officer who has become a savage jungle animal. Coppola would like to get Steve McQueen to portray the killer captain, and Marlon Brando as the crazed commander.

Cover Girl Models

Take A Hard Ride

Production is due to commence soon on Roman Polanski's newest project, **The Pirates,** teaming him once again with his **Chinatown** star, Jack Nicholson.

"You can't tell a gunfighter by his squint" would appear to be the story behind the villainous visage of well-known western heavy Lee Van Cleef. As part of their publicity for **Take A Hard Ride,** 20th Century Fox revealed a number of interesting things about Van Cleef's private life. First, despite his tough-guy roles, he's a humanitarian; "We filmed on three islands with tough terrain for men and horses. I insisted that the horses be protectively shod for the duration of the filming." And, "My father taught me about guns when I was a kid. Every time I'm handed a gun I check to see if it's loaded."

He's a music lover who plays the harmonica, trombone, guitar and piano, and has his California music room equipped with a concert grand. In fact, he's so serious about the matter that he owns both LVC Records and Lee Van Cleef Music, which have issued songs composed and sung by him.

And you thought he was just another pretty face. ●

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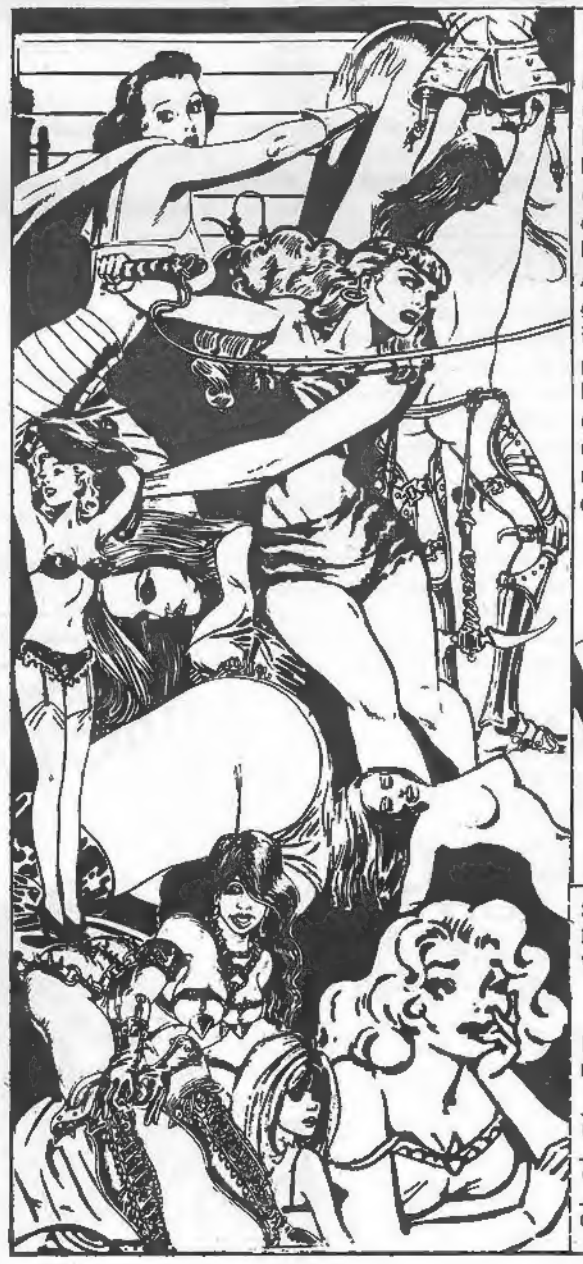

In response to the interest generated by our special pin-up issue, **MEDIASCENE** has acquired a small number of copies of the French book, **Les Filles De Papier** (The Paper Girls). This 130-page volume contains a wealth of sexsational art, illustrating the captivating beauty of the girls of the comics. American, European and underground artists are all represented in this hard-to-find item with 32 pages in full, fabulous color. We have only a few of these scorchers available now for a limited time only—at $5.00 plus .40 postage. A must for all those who love girls—and comics! !

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23-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1945)
Side A - Gunpowder Plot
Side B - The Speckled Band
24-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1939)
Side A - Missing Submarine Plans
Side B - Scandal in Bohemia
25-MERCURY THEATER: WELLES (1938)
Side A - Sherlock Holmes
Side B - Sherlock Holmes Conclusion
26-MERCURY THEATER: WELLES (1938)
Side A - Dracula Part I
Side B - Dracula Part II
27-SAM SPADE (1947-48)
Side A - Bow Window Caper
Side B - Dry Martini Caper
28-SHADOW OF FU MANCHU (1930's)
Side A - Chapters 1 and 2
Side B - Chapters 3 and 4
29-SHADOW OF FU MANCHU (1930's)
Side A - Chapters 5 and 6
Side B - Chapters 7 and 8

MAGICIAN HEROES

30-BLACKSTONE (1945)
Side A - Death Defying Death
Curse of Kali
Side B - Death in the Crystal
Knife from the Dark
31-CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN (1948)
Side A - Chapters 1 and 2
Side B - Chapters 3 and 4

ADVENTURE HEROES

32-CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT (1940, 41 & 42)
Side A - Origin of Cap and Secret Squadron
Side B - Ivan Shark and French Commandos
33-BUCK ROGERS (1939)
Side A - Programs 1 and 2
Side B - Programs 3 and 4
34-LONE RANGER (1950)
Side A - Big Baldy Mine
Side B - El Diablo and the Preacher
35-GREEN HORNET (1939 & 46)
Side A - Parking Lot Shakedowns
Side B - Escape for Revenge

MYSTERY

36-SUSPENSE: JAMES CAGNEY (1948)
Side A - Love's Lovely Counterfeit
Side B - Conclusion
37-SUSPENSE (1945-46)
Side A - House in Cypress Canyon
Side B - Drury's Bones: Karloff
38-LIGHTS OUT (1938 & 43)
Side A - Cat Wife: Karloff
Side B - Sub-Basement Monster

SCIENCE FICTION

39-TOM CORBETT (1952)
Side A - Greatest Show in Universe I
Side B - Greatest Show in Universe II
40-SPACE PATROL (1950)
Side A - Monster from the Past
Side B - Watchman of Warmok
41-2000 PLUS (1950)
Side A - When World's Meet
Side B - Flying Saucers

SAMPLERS

42-SUPERHERO SAMPLER (1940-43)
Side A - Black Hood/Black Castle
Side B - The Blue Beetle
43-WESTERN SAMPLER (1937-47)
Side A - Buck Jones/Gene Autry
Side B - Tennessee Jed/Tom Mix
44-AVIATION SAMPLER (1935-47)
Side A - Flash Gordon/Hop Harrigan
Side B - Sky King/Smilin' Jack
45-DETECTIVE SAMPLER (1940-46)
Side A - Charlie Chan/Chick Carter Boy Detective
Side B - Dan Dunn/Dick Tracy
46-MAGIC SAMPLER (1933-41)
Side A - Magic Island/Mandrake
Side B - Moon over Africa/ Omar the Wizard

COMEDY

47-ABBOTT AND COSTELLO (1944)
Side A - Who's on First
Side B - Into the future
48-AMOS AND ANDY (1946 & 52)
Side A - Andy Buys a lot
Side B - 10,000th Anniversary
49-FRED ALLEN (1948)
Side A - Pamela and James Mason
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